



THE LAST OF
THE STUARTS

JULIAN



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THE LAST OF
THE STUARTS



The Tomb of the Stuarts at St. Peter's (Canova)

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS

A DRAMATIC POEM
IN FIVE ACTS

By CHARLES T. FLEMING

Author of "The Maestro," Etc.



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By C. J. DOWNEY

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"By the time when George III came to the throne, the combat between loyalty and liberty was come to an end; and Charles Edward, old, tipsy and childless, was dying in Italy."

—*Thackeray*



The Persons of the Poem

CHARLES EDWARD STUART, *Known as the Count of Albany, Pretender to the English throne. ("Bonnie Charlie.")*

HENRY STUART, *Cardinal of York, Charles Edward's brother.*

DUKE DE CHOISEUL, *Minister of France.*

MARSHAL DE BROGLIO, *also of France.*

COUNT VITTORIO ALFIERI, *Dramatic poet.*

DUKE OF MONTE LIBRETTI.

DUKE OF BRACIANNO.

DUKE OF CERI.

DUKE GRIMALDI, *Spanish ambassador at Rome.*

ABBE CALUSO, *of Portugal.*

SIGNOR ORLANDINI.

DOMENICO CORRI, *A musician of Florence.*

FRANCIS XAVIER FABRE, *de Montpelier, art student.*

A TAILOR.

LOUISA VON STOLBERG-GÆDERN, *Countess of Albany, wife of Charles Edward.*

DUCHESS OF MONTE LIBRETTI.

DUCHESS OF BRACIANNO.

DUCHESS ZAGAROLO.

SIGNORA ORLANDINI.

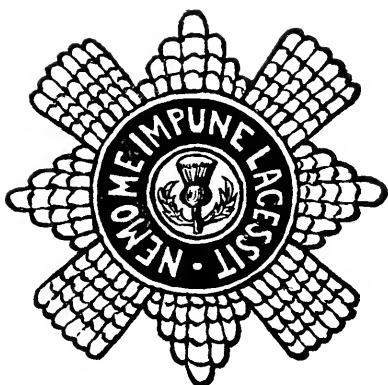
MISS WALKINSHAW, *Morganatic daughter of the Pretender, afterwards Duchess of Albany.*

ABBESS, *Nuns, Courtiers, Servants, Etc.*

PLACE—*Florence and Rome.* TIME—178—.

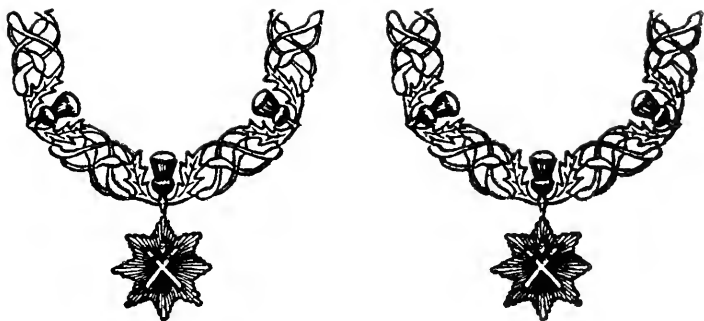


Charles Edward, the Boy



The First Act





The Last of the Stuarts

The First Act

A PORTRAIT

PLACE—*Florence, Italy.*

TIME—*An October afternoon in 178—.*

SCENE—*A room in the Uffizi gallery.*

Rest, Sir Leslie, is found not in sleep, nor yet in death, but in the lives of other men; for sleep and death are blind to their own tranquility, but self-forgetfulness, the camera obscura of perceiving souls, is a joyous consciousness discovered by the gods, pure of all will and difficult—so difficult—of capture. Snuff out the smoking wick of your own sorrows, Sir Leslie, and sit you in the proscenium of other men's and other times' ambitions. The stagescope, whence the glow of wisdom answers to the philosophy of the passive darkness! Let others live and will their own notions endlessly, that we may rest satisfied in the suspense of purpose.

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Fancy, the o'erruler of time and space, invites you to rest in the world of a gone century. A room in the Uffizi gallery—do you know it? The corridor beyond is known in the Italian as the Occidentale. The works which line the walls are hung to Fancy's taste—and not as I have seen them on my last little journey yonder. Not only have successive generations of committees seen fit to rearrange these priceless possessions, but the caprice of government has replaced not a few and the vandalism of war has removed many to distant seats from which they need scarcely be expected to return. The most aggressive Egotist of all time, whose Egotism overran the states of Europe and measured its dominance by the perpetuity of the pyramids, may have caught a glimpse of this very room. And, of the host of pictures that Egotism stole for its glory, how many did the solution of war decree back to their natural habitations?

One painting that you behold will not be found there in our own twentieth century, and your vigilant art photographer, who sells reprints to the chance fascination of the tourist, will shrug his shoulders, in spite of the verdict of history, and tell you it never existed. Granted, if you will, that the portrait of Charles XII, the some-time king of Sweden, has shared the fate of its regal original and become an ingredient of a century's dust; still are we permitted, by grace of a half hour's Thalian vision, to take note of its more than imaginary prominence, to measure its severity of stature, made solemnly gorgeous by a coat of maroon satin, sprinkled at the collar with a cataract of elaborate lace, together with its deep green expanse of breeches and its black stockings; and, best of all, to analyze the thoughts

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that the delineator attributed to the countenance of the warrior king of the North.

I see you are distracted, Sir Leslie, by the many sight-seers—by those whose inconsequent mingling and varying shades of purpose render all degrees of entertainment to one who looks in upon them for the study of action less than for the dermatisation of human souls. We devotees of the pit have so accustomed ourselves to eaves-dropping that our caloused perceptions may engage in the personal affairs of others without a tremor. What did you say, Sir Leslie? Yes, I should take them to be young Englishmen—well connected, no doubt, for they wear the British regimentals. Autumn is a proper time of the year for foreigners to visit Florence. Here are SIGNOR and SIGNORA ORLANDINI, friends of royalty. Well may they take delight in exhibiting their city's possessions to the man of religion. The ABBÉ CALUSO of Portugal—I am sure it is he. The young man is MONSIEUR FABRE—FRANCIS XAVIER FABRE de Montpellier, who is studying art at the very source of its inspiration. I am interested in overhearing what the young Frenchman says to ORLANDINI. Listen, Sir Leslie. Self-forgetfulness, remember. The philosophies of other men's lives are open to you.

FRANCIS XAVIER FABRE.

I FEED my thought's blood on them, Orlandini.
If there be channels through and through the soul,
Frailer, perhaps, and more invisible
Than ducts that thread my body, I am sure
They course with many colors that the sun,
Sitting tear-stained and rescued from the storms

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Of afternoon, ne'er joyed his sight upon.
I came to Florence with the student's rage
To see—to see—to see; and I have seen.
Behold—

(Tenderly outstretches his hands toward the paintings about him.)

SIGNOR ORLANDINI.

(As though it were the duty of mature men to regard the glow of youthful sentiment as mere affectation)—

—But not that you may bear report
Of things you saw to your mouth-open friends,
For vain report's own gluttony—saying, "Here
"I saw the steps where the Magnificent
"Di Medici trod to his dinner." "There
"My melancholy, weeping eyes beheld
"Where Julius Cæsar tripped his giant toe." *(Laughs.)*

FABRE.

Not I.

ORLANDINI.

Still, say they, th' Imperator, Cæsar,
Built him this city for the modern gape's
Invention of a trade.

FABRE—*(Not unappreciative)—*
Cæsar did well.

The traffic in tradition gives the living
Respect for the dead. *(With measured paces)* The guide,
no doubt,
Can step him this-wise in the very prints
That Cæsar left.

ORLANDINI.

(Wise men forget their steps,
And do not dally gathering of them up.)
Saxon credulity spares a good price

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To these poor beggars that know everything.

Rare Britons! (*Laughs, as though it were a joke to be an Englishman.*)

SIGNORA ORLANDINI—(*Approaching*)—

Ugh! Why snort you at your peers?

(ORLANDINI *continues to laugh.*)

Snort, horse! Now, laugh at your own folly. —Stay:
I've heard a surfeit.

ORLANDINI.

Bah!

SIGNORA.

The Abbe says

The prince approaches in the gallery—

I mean the Count of Albany. Laugh not

At the count's subjects.

ORLANDINI.

What! *His* subjects? Lord! (*More laughter.*)

SIGNORA.

My words are square—I said “his subjects.” Though

His British blood flows only in the crown

He may not wear, and drinks he royalty

From Tantalus's cup, I caution you

Forget not *that*. They *are* his subjects, sir,—

His subjects—. (*The two Englishmen in regimentals pass.*)

There! The military garb

Of the count's country. You defame yourself

And honor England with a fool's laugh at her

High sovereign.

ABBE CALUSO.

I pity Charles.

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ORLANDINI.

And I—

That is: his festered heart, fierce though it be
From the besetment of his age—(*aside*)—and wine.
Montpelier and I were bartering
Our sober moments for some merriment.
Nothing besides—eh, Fabre?

FABRE.

Nothing more.

ORLANDINI.

Then let us climb upon our pedestals
Again. (*The SIGNORA seizes him by the sleeve.*) What
trouble now?

SIGNORA—(*As the two retire*)—

Count Albany—

FABRE—(*To CALUSO*)—

Father, I am all soul with seeing. Ah!—
There is no finitude of hunger in
The soul, no gorge of simple beauty for
Celestial appetite. My immortal part
Partakes of the immortal day by day.
Doubtless, I seem o'er-fanciful, o'er-fond,
O'er-something that must thrive in secret, lest
Speech wither it.

CALUSO.

God send thee many years.

My prayers attend the nursing-time of fancy.
Reverence is God's primal gift to art.
Revere above, below, God, self and men;
Yea, when thy tongue pranks wit, pay reverence to it.
God laughs, but sneers not.

FABRE.

Didst thou hear me sneer,

My father?

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CALUSO.

No, 'twas Orlandini sneered.

FABRE.

Yes—while we waited Alfieri's coming
I stood among the pictures, loving them—

CALUSO.

Ah! Sacred words! Thou hast the future in thee.
No more of this. What can have overtaken
The count?

FABRE.

'Tis safe he's gazing at St. Mary's—
Swelling himself stern over the prospect. Good!
That's his dimension. Presently he'll solve
In what the Campanile is so heavy,
Yet weighs so little, and describe in full
The moral that will carve a lily and
A leper's hand both of one block. He's wise
Of marble.

CALUSO.

Let him fold his thoughts in stone.
Come—the next room.

ORLANDINI—(*Advancing*)—

Hold. Will you leave your friends?

FABRE.

To the Dutch masters, until we are met
By Alfieri. (*Exeunt FABRE and the ABBE.*)

ORLANDINI.

Which will be on earth,
I trust. (*To the SIGNORA*) I said these scandals could not
hide
Themselves. Indeed, 'twere quite as easy to
Bridle a vapor and defend the nose
From a foul odor, as protect a prince

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From the report of his own infamies.
Renown will never run its good deeds through
A sieve and circumvent the bad. The mesh
Is not too fine to miss them.

SIGNORA—(*Petulantly*)—

That is mine.

My very sermon you are borrowing.
You ever would cash phrases from my lips
And trick them up as your own children.

ORLANDINI.

Lord!

Why should I quarrel with you upon a matter
Of parentage?

SIGNORA—(*Waiving the issue*)—

My darling king aggrieves
Me heartily. One moment, affable;
The next he falls a-dreaming and refills
His broken spirit with such victories
As can be lured with wine.

ORLANDINI.

Why don't you say
He drinks? "Drink" is a good word and it means
Only one thing I know of—"drink."

SIGNORA.

Signor!

ORLANDINI—(*Giddily*)—

What says the latest gossip about
His grace, the uncrowned king, and his wine-cups?

SIGNORA—(*Saucily*)—

Nothing about his cups, for they do not
Reel with their burden nor go tumbling down
Out of all grace. No scandal about that
To set the world a-talking of his cups.

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A goblet brimming with the best Bordeaux
Will never twitch a muscle.

ORLANDINI.

Good—proceed.

About the prince, then, since you will contend
And parry answers.

SIGNORA.

'Twas your challenge, sir.

ORLANDINI.

Ah, well. No matter. What about the prince?

SIGNORA.

The prince is still the prince; and, for his wife,
Louisa—we will say she's still his wife.
The prince is called the Count of Albany,
And sometimes the—

ORLANDINI.

A truce!

SIGNORA.

—the Chevalier

St. George,—

ORLANDINI.

No more of that.

SIGNORA.

—and sometimes king,

Because of a bevy of his faithful set
Him on the throne of Scotland for a day.
They would in time have had him at St. James,
But that a few knaves, sicklier than yourself,
Withheld their heads for fear of losing them.

ORLANDINI—(*Moving away*)—

O, well, I'll join the Abbe.

SIGNORA—(*Following*)—

As it is,

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He's only prince, and his young wife is but
A countess. That is all.

ORLANDINI—(*Returning*)—

So, you are done?

Eternity of woman at an end!

God's will be done if he can set him bounds
To the everlasting!

SIGNORA—(*Indicated*)—

Now, give me a kiss.

ORLANDINI.

Pish! Kisses? Not I. Hold. Ah, what's a kiss? (*What
ambassadors are the lips!*)

SIGNORA.

Think you that we were seen?

ORLANDINI.

And what care you?

Propriety is man's invention. Shame

Will ever recognize her children. None,

Perhaps, saw us, unless his majesty,

King Charles the Twelfth—(*Indicates picture on the
left.*) —But he would never start

At trifles.

SIGNORA—(*Pacing before Sweden's portrait*)—

Still, he has a creeping cast

Of th' eye that follows as I walk.

ORLANDINI.

If you

Shall catch him at it, strangling a laugh

In a somehow twitching noose of feature, throw

Your snuff-box at him, till he sneeze himself

Into a false perspective.

Now, my sweet,

What was the news you pocketed from me?

Taunt me with facts, if you must prank.

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SIGNORA.

Listen :

The prince this very day bade the discharge
Of all his Highland servants.

ORLANDINI.

That is all?

SIGNORA.

Pray you, what more?

ORLANDINI—(*That laugh again!*)—

To all his serving-men
He gave his leave to travel. Without pay,
No doubt?

SIGNORA.

Pooh, pooh! I said "his Highland men."

ORLANDINI.

Ho, ho! Poor Bonnie Scotland!

SIGNORA.

Since you laugh,

I'll not explain the cause.

ORLANDINI.

Another kiss.

(*Another treaty of the lips as the SIGNORA glances furtively at the painted Scandinavian.*)

SIGNORA.

His grace says he is growing quite insane
With having ghosts to serve him.

ORLANDINI.

True—insane;

But what's his argument?

SIGNORA.

Wraiths of the gone
Affection, sieging him for burial.
Scotland is his dead. His wounded heart

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Sees Scotland in the tempest of his sleep.
This is the funeral rite.

ORLANDINI.

The count is old,
And dotage has no friend beyond its grief.
Sorrow becomes the tenderest minister
Of the last journey. He will bid them back.
Mark—as he sums his balance, he will send
For all the ciphers.

SIGNORA.

You dismiss old age
With all the tearless logic of the books,
Lopping each leafless branch.

ORLANDINI.

Not that.

SIGNORA—(*Hoarsely*)—

When I

Have been dismantled by this splitting cough,
The walls of earth will tell me I am mourned
By one reflection from you—"God knew best."

ORLANDINI.

I shall be comforted by what the priests
Assure me—

SIGNORA.

Always a mountebank.

ORLANDINI.

Indeed,

If that can add you peace. —And I shall kick
The dust up every day, to be restored
To recollection of you. Many tears
Will flow when you fly in my eyes.

SIGNORA—(*Making practical demonstration of
the prophecy*)—

As now.

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ORLANDINI—(*Avoiding the fulfillment*)—
As now you do not. What a merry race.

CALUSO—(*Entering leisurely with FABRE*)—
God save us! Children!

ORLANDINI—(*To the SIGNORA*)—
Hold—the place is public.

SIGNORA—(*Subdued*)—
And what care you? Propriety is man's
Invention.

FABRE.

Ah—a mission for you, father.
Religion was first born of conjugal
Distraction. I'll seek for Alfieri. (*Exit.*)

CALUSO.
Another day we shall return to this,
Seeing a better homily's at hand.
Albany and the countess come this way
With a large suite. I pray you not strew thorns,
More than already lie, upon his path;
Since, if the tales be true, they do not seek
Worse conjugal example than themselves.
Besides, let not his royalty discern
A satire of itself in subject mold.

(*Something more engaging than the prating of a priest.*
Bother his sermon. Take a firm look at old CHARLES
EDWARD, the last of the pretenders, as he enters from
the corridor, leaning on the left arm of LOUISA, his
fair young wife, the COUNTESS OF ALBANY, and fol-
lowed by the DUKE and DUCHESS OF MONTE LIBRET-
TI and the DUKE and DUCHESS OF BRACIANNO. This
is not the twenty-three-year-old youth of 'Forty-five,
the Bonnie Charlie that frightened the wits out of
George II. There must be some mistake. Indeed—

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time is always making such mistakes. Error was ever a matter of chronology. We must accept the blotches on the cheeks and the crapulous nose, the knotty shoulders and the decrepit gait; but still there remains some suggestion of the Jacobite idol as he muses and gestures among the pictures in the rear, displaying all the titled decorations pinned upon his bosom. Observe the quasi-military costume, the imperious inclination of the head, the reminder of gentility in the handling of his hat. The impetus of all that youthful ardor cannot die out in any life-time. Do you notice, as he turns to the left, that he carries a cane—and leans upon it, too?)

CALUSO.

God save his grace. He hath a firm step still.

ORLANDINI.

Sober, by all that's holy!

SIGNORA.

Silence!

ORLANDINI.

Who?

CHARLES—(*Before the portrait of Sweden's king*)—

A sturdy visage. Perhaps too intent.
Not free enough in its unfaltering hold.
A supple glance becomes a soldier as
A supple hand to him that plays the viol.
He balances the battle with more grace
When the sword of his eye is restless—thus:
Concealing its attention. —I but guessed
The man a soldier by the scar. 'Tis there.
Whom is it likeness of?

DUCHESS OF MONTE LIBRETTI.

King Charles the Twelfth.

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CHARLES.

Of Sweden? Right. I should have guessed that too,
By this—this somewhat quickened nerve of th' soul,
Begotten of my father's anxious bosom.
My kingly wit should recollect him well—
Him that death renegaded from our cause.
His brow entreats me. Yet, beneath that brow
What ambushed cunning!—as, if it should love,
'Twere love to lure, to ravish power not love.
I shall repent my first reflection:
Aim, eyes—sharp, certain, without parrying;
Speed straight through all the carnage to the goal.
When Sweden fell at Frederickshall, that death
Bequeathed black exile only to the Stuart.
Death's banishment were preferable. Ah!—
Your stout ten thousand were as zero marks
Without you.

ORLANDINI—(*To CALUSO*)—

He affronts himself like this—

CALUSO.

His grace is weeping inwardly. His tears
Chafe as of brine his unforgetting soul.

ORLANDINI.

It is his living. Relish fattens him
On old reminders. See him—

SIGNORA.

Hush! I listen.

CHARLES.

Louisa, was it heaven that forestalled
His vigor in the flesh and left it painted
Only? (*Turning sharply.*) What! Louisa, heard you
that?

LOUISA—(*Behold, she has been chatting with
the DUCHESS*)—

Your majesty is speaking? Yes—I heard.

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I think the dress becoming. Now I look
Again, I find it quite my liking. —Heavens!

CHARLES—(*With threatening anger*)—
You mock me—traitor! (*To the men.*) Stand you from
between.

My consort spews her wit upon her king.
Crave pardon quickly. Heaven be the judge.

LOUISA—(*At a distance*)—
Your royal censure runs in arrest of God,
Whose thunderbolts do not, as some suppose,
Carry his high decrees across the sky.
Your queen shall ask forgiveness, though she knows
No condemnation.

CHARLES.
Infidelity—
Treason of sympathy! Guilty of what
You are not, filling the void with witless things
That savor in your smiles. For they who laugh
Are traitors unto sorrow. Sorrow rules,
And there is something sacred in his rule
That calls you blasphemers. What better cause?

LOUISA.
Now, since you measure the dimensions of
Th' indictment, thus—so long, so broad, so deep,
I plead myself unfaithful to your phantoms.

CHARLES.
Still you mock me.

LOUISA.
Nay—not you, not you,
Though still you dream the mockery is you.
You taunt yourself, while I revere my lord. (*Bows with
humble grace.*)
Never his dead self.

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CHARLES.

Did not I discharge
My Scotchmen?

LOUISA.

Aye, but prate of them forever.
Be wise, and let the younger world adore
The whiteness of your hair.

CHARLES—(*Running his fingers meditatively
through his locks*)—

Ah, white, indeed!

Only sequential years have made them fit
For a life's diadem. Gray logic of the youth
That time has harvested. Once they were gold.

CALUSO.

Your grace, the tattlers gather.

CHARLES.

That I see.

The king capitulates to the public gaze.

(*The PRETENDER retires to the left and stands alone before the portrait of Charles XII. The others withdraw from view.*)

Age argues youth, youth argues age. These locks
Could not be white had they not once been gold.
Boasts she of reverence for the wintry crown,
Remembering not from whence each season fades
Into another? 'Tis vain adoration,
And it must be forgiven. I forgive.
Years forgive years—how else do the times thrive?
That which we have not lived we have not loved.
Gray hairs the debtor, and they owe to youth
All they have earned, but youth must earn, as well.
Such understanding I shall understand.
Each age shall be its own interpreter,
What years explored and what experience

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Full fathomed. Yea, of all things yet to learn
Death is the greatest, highest, the most precious.

SIGNORA ORLANDINI—(*Entering*)—
Your majesty—

CHARLES.

I am companionless.
Walk with me from the corridor, Signora.

(The two young strangers in British regimentals enter and pass through, not without pausing to respond to CHARLES EDWARD'S fervent salute. If one thinks it is easy to forsake an ideal, let him attempt it once with all its bitter smitings! As the PRINCE and SIGNORA ORLANDINI retire, the COUNTESS OF ALBANY, the ABBE and ORLANDINI again appear.)

LOUISA.

Your reverence will pardon this affront
Of public latitude. Nay—hardly that:
Pardon is sin's disclaimer, and the craft
Of heaven regenerates false hearts. In this
Shall not the surgeon's dispensation dare
A fault of the adjustment less than offending parts?
It calls for cure, not mercy, having failed
The medicaster, Custom, to assuage
The malady of circumstance.

CALUSO.

Forget.

LOUISA.

Ah, there's the disease—remembering. If his hour
Runs mad with the affliction of regret,
The retro-steps of a much-yearning soul,
Fevered with years like old fermenting wine,
Which grows delirious by the compound of
The once delicious grape, how the new fruit
Must mortify in the old cask. Forget?

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All might be fugitive but that the king
Sees agony in every smile of mine.
Discrete desires are glaring enemies
Beyond entreaty. Ah—philosophies are swords.
What is a crown to me I do not wear?
I cannot cure the mischief.

ORLANDINI.

Let the dead
Bury their dead—my answer. Look not back
Upon intolerable Sodom like the wife
That checked herself in a salt obelisk.

CALUSO—(*Solemnly to ORLANDINI*)—
Hold! Woman plants her wisdom in the church.
Yours takes its root of the world.

LOUISA.

Nay—let it pass.
We'll fill our life of phantom royalty
With multiplied concerns: variety,
A surfeit's freedom from what stultifies.
Off with this monotone.

CALUSO.

Some kindly act
Were suitable to woo his majesty
From the untoward mood.

ORLANDINI—(*Drawing aside*)—

The priest is right.

LOUISA.

There is a charm in living day by day;
And by each burst of the sun to vow yourself
Blessed in little things is wiser far
Than solemnly surveying the full length
Of life like a dark story. Is there not
Some talisman to charge with this simple spell
The soul of an uncrowned king?

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CALUSO.

Love is the spell.

LOUISA.

Ah, something to be held between the fingers,
An amulet, or—Here I have it. See.
This brooch was from my father, who, I'm sure,
Lived his life well, yet threw each day aside
Like a spent cloak. This may be worn upon
The bosom of my lord, a symbol of
The present, of today's affections and
Today's concerns. A childish trinket?— Ah,
But childish trinkets trick this childish world.
—By this to draw him from that black abyss
Called yesterday? In truth, 'tis but a brooch,
But when I explain my prettiest its moral,
He will accept the path of its persuasion.
“Once was I king,” the haunted one will say;
And I shall answer: “Tut—the ‘badge of life’ ”.

CALUSO.

Pray that it win.

LOUISA.

I'm eager now to try it.

(The ABBE and LOUISA retire to the rear and begin manifesting an interest in a painting of Fra Bartholomeo. ORLANDINI is discovered before the portrait of Charles XII.)

ORLANDINI.

You saw no scandal in my wife and me,
But, on my soul, you played the devil with
The prince's household. *(A pause.)* Pretty costume, eh?

My spouse indulges more his fancy than
The countess. “Darling prince!” *(Another pause.)*
Becoming—ha!

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I shall tell Alfieri about this,
And hear him prophesy.

(Who is this that enters with FABRE from the right foreground as the picture-loving countess moves with the ABBE to the rear? Judging by his youthful manner, his red hair and his black riding habit, it must be the strange ALFIERI we have heard so much of. VITTORIO ALFIERI, agile, restless and eccentric! One would take him and his companion, FABRE, to be mere school boys, fresh from the academy at Turin. It is easy to believe, if it be true, as I am told, that the best likeness of COUNT VITTORIO has come from the brush of FABRE. The young dramatist is seemingly oppressed with his own shyness.)

FABRE.

Why do you move

So tardily?

VITTORIO ALFIERI.

Do not disturb me, Fabre.

I've been horse-backing toward Fiesole.

My blood is rampant. 'Tis my practice to

Settle the sediment and compose the stream

Of my thoughts before I speak.

ORLANDINI—(*Turning*)—

The rake is here.

Hi, Alfieri, it was only now

I had you in my thoughts.

ALFIERI.

I pray, release

Me from them. I am in a dungeon of

Calamity already.

ORLANDINI.

Did you say

“Calamity”?

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

ALFIERI.

I did. My lines won't rhyme.

ORLANDINI—(To FABRE)—

There—did you hear? He says his lines don't rhyme,
And therefore he's about to hang himself
With one of them. (To ALFIERI.) I have a better still—
A husband and a wife that do not rhyme.

ALFIERI.

Oh, heavens! Let them trot the meter of
Parini. I swear, 'twill jog them both to death.

ORLANDINI.

Not ill advice.

FABRE.

Desist.

ALFIERI.

Hold—I said both.

'Twould be unmannerly to have them die
Together.

FABRE.

Alfieri, I protest.

If Signor Orlandini is so bent
Upon his joke, withhold your wit awhile,
Until his wife is entered in defense.

ALFIERI—(To ORLANDINI)—

Oh, you? (*With abrupt, quizzical cynicism.*) Your
pardon—

ORLANDINI—(Taken aback)—

Not my pardon, pray.

Signora is a tender wife. We do
Not stir the currents of the air.

FABRE.

Not you?

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

Then I am he that pardon issues to. (*Kneels half-mockingly.*)

ORLANDINI.

Get up, sweet boy. There walks the lady now—
The very one.

ALFIERI.

She with Caluso?

ORLANDINI.

Right.

ALFIERI.

She stands erect. He has not bent her. Who—?

ORLANDINI.

No matter. (*Aside.*) The Signora will pluck out
My tongue for playing gossip. (*To ALFIERI.*) A dame
Of quality. Say, what think you their broil
Was all about?

ALFIERI.

A lover.

ORLANDINI.

No.

ALFIERI.

A child.

ORLANDINI.

No.

ALFIERI.

Money.

ORLANDINI.

No.

ALFIERI.

They surely did not quarrel.
I've named the sum of all domestic strife.

ORLANDINI.

For once your wit is splintered at the edge.

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

FABRE.

Come, tell us, Orlandini. Do not keep
Us hung up by the thumbs.

ORLANDINI.

'Twas this way, then:
They split upon that picture yonder.

ALFIERI.

Taste!
And it was only taste? They did not quarrel.

ORLANDINI.

That is not all.

ALFIERI.

Go on.

ORLANDINI.

Her master said
His majesty, King Charles the Twelfth—'tis he—
Stood like a soldier and was built to fight
In the prime cause of justice—such a one
To bring an exiled monarch to his throne.
And she—

ALFIERI.

What did she say?

ORLANDINI.

—Lightly replied
She thought the costume splendid. Then they met—
The hosts of domesticity arrayed
Like magic, as when Frederick struck his tents.

ALFIERI.

He was a fool— You still insist they quarreled?

ORLANDINI.

I do.

ALFIERI.

—And she a prattler. Let the church

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

Decree that none such wed. There'll be no more
Of children to bequeath their folly to;
And silly tongues that babble, babble, babble,
Will quit the mouths of women. —In heaven's name!

(ALFIERI, *strangely agitated, recognizes the* COUNTESS
ALBANY *as she turns and approaches with the* ABBE.
Counsels against too much wagging of the tongue
have been uttered from time to time since the begin-
ning of history—but to what purpose?)

You should have told me it was Albany.
(*Aside.*) Fugitive speech is not all feminine;
I have mistook the sex of silly tongues.

LOUISA—(*To ORLANDINI*)—
The Abbe bids me not to temporize
With the indifference of our domestic breach,
But join his majesty—you understand.

ORLANDINI.
His counsel's from on high. 'Tis best.

LOUISA—(*Turning to depart*)—
My thought.

ALFIERI—(*To ORLANDINI*)—
I do not know the lady.

FABRE.

Nor do I.

ORLANDINI—(*To LOUISA*)—
Be firm with him. One moment—pardon me.
Your grace—Count Alfieri. Monsieur Fabre.

LOUISA—(*To ALFIERI*)—
By name I have already known you—horses, plays.
You ride both.

ALFIERI.

Letters have many a time, your grace,
Unsaddled me, and left me limping. But—
I pray the horse may never prove less noble.

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

LOUISA.

And Monsieur Fabre—you—?

FABRE.

I—

ORLANDINI.

His is the brush.

LOUISA.

No better part. Unless 'tis—plays and—horses.

ALFIERI.

A horse for a poet is a luxury
His literary gallop does not gain.

CALUSO.

Come—spend no longer time away from him.
Signor, the lady to her lord.

LOUISA—(*Taking the arm of ORLANDINI*)—

Be fair:

Give back the king his queen, and—claim your own.
Stay—father. The two friends—no doubt they would
Be pleased to see my house. Our court is gay
Tonight, and gaiety will bless them. Adieu. (*Exeunt
the two.*)

(*One procures a good view of the young dramatist as he
lingers in the foreground, twitching the end of his
riding whip with the absent-mindedness that would
expend itself in stroking his moustache if he had one.
It occurs to an observer that COUNT VITTORIO has a
cast of countenance like that of Washington in his
youth, the Washington that fought under Braddock.
The ABBE and MONTPELIER have retired to the rear
and CALUSO has left his French companion intent
upon the paintings.*)

ALFIERI—(*Alone*)—

At last we meet. We could not separate,
Did we not meet. For, since the tugging of



Fabre's Portrait of Alfieri

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

Dispellant motives holds love tense and makes
The captive ends writhe in sweet anguish, I
Am relished and ready for it. Let it come.
'Twas prophesied a half a year ago
In the proscenium—that night she tripped
And smiled after the opera. Who sang?—
'Twas "Orpheus." —That tremor was the pledge
Of further trembling. Loving all extremes,
I could not throw a mantle o'er the threats
Of red Vesuvius if Italy
Were doomed by it. I'll cinerate myself
In Herculaneum ere I shall wish
To dam a passion once pronounced. Go on—
I'll turn not back till hell is gratified
And flesh suffices pain up to the hilt.
If I convene fine mischief in my soul
Until it baits me mad, I'll write a play
Of Isabella and her step-son. I
Will play it boldly. —Fabre, what was said
About a costume?

FABRE—(*Approaching*)—
Orlandini said

She thought it splendid—Charles the Twelfth's, I mean.

ALFIERI.

This painted thing?

(*He appears to be comparing Sweden's portrait with his own figure, as he walks and meditates before the painting.*)

FABRE—(*As ALFIERI retires*)—

Where go you now, my boy?

ALFIERI.

To write a sonnet. (*Exit.*)

FABRE—(*Presently*)—

And, am I the last
Of this evaporated company? (*Exit.*)

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

(What is there about the atmosphere of pictures that limbers up the soul? Here are two others among the concourse of spectators that would fain be voluble under the spell of the brush. Assuredly French, and state officials at that. He that walks on the left is the minister, DUKE DE CHOISEUL. The other—ah, you know him?—MARSHAL DE BROGLIO. I know him by repute. They withdraw from the crowd.)

CHOISEUL.

We've lost him, Broglio. To track his steps
Throughout this multi-pictured labyrinth
Calls for a St. Anthony in a spy's person,
Detective over-instinct, halted not
By tempting fruits strewn in the path of duty.

BROGLIO.

The guards said "in this room."

CHOISEUL.

I am watching here.
Go ogle through the corridor. The king
Is somewhere: it is his prerogative—
To be alive.

BROGLIO.

Among the living, then,
I'll seek for him. *(Exit.)*

CHOISEUL—*(Alone)*—

Troops are the instrument.
Ten thousand?—more. They shall be had for him.
When the king-row invites us, who should halt
At slaughtering checkers? Earth is full of men
When Brunswick falters front. King George's throne
Is but a bubble. Wilkes is only one
Of the young thorns that prick it. Rebels abroad—
America—the Falklands: these are things
That Fortune reckons with. Stuart is king,

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

But usurpation poisons the traditions
Of the Lord's kingdom. There's the cry to weld
The elements of politics. We crown
The king, and then—we crown his majesty.

BROGLIO—(*Entering*)—
I found him.

CHOISEUL.
Well?

BROGLIO.
Discovered at the door,
Aiding the Countess Albany into
The royal carriage.

CHOISEUL.
Ho—the Countess! What
A queen for th' island colony of France,
Against the stern Dutch hussy, George's mate.
France married her to Charles. Ah, we are men,
We politicians. These disturbers are
Too fine a brood to have them cradle out.

BROGLIO.
The queen is beautiful, and France has been
A hard god-mother.

CHOISEUL.
Tut, tut, tut, my man.
She must have smiled you out of politics,
Or smirked you honorable.

BROGLIO.
You've seen her not?

CHOISEUL.
Never. Ah, me! —But come, what happened then?

BROGLIO.
As I approached, the king bent o'er the hand
Of the Countess, kissed it, and merrily

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

Fastened a gem she gave him on his breast.
I did not analyze the circumstance.
With others by, we could not speak in full.
Enough, however. We shall meet tonight.
The Countess entertains. She has her court
At cards, 'twas said, but after eight o'clock.
We shall arrive before.

CHOISEUL.

So all is well?

BROGLIO.

Even to the letter.

CHOISEUL—(*Turning pictureward*)—

Let us study art. (*Exeunt.*)

(*Enter ALFIERI. Ah, the evaporating company is beginning to precipitate again. COUNT VITTORIO seems unduly circumspect, but his manner is doubtless explained by the presence of this strange fellow that follows at his heels—a tailor, it would seem, judging by his garb. The poet gestures at the portrait of Charles XII. as if he meant to hold a clinic over the painted likeness of the late monarch.*)

ALFIERI—(*Addressing portrait*)—

Never before a sartorial fashion plate—

Were you? (*To the tailor.*) This way. Good tailors,
like great poets,

Spurn all suggestions, lest the masterpiece
Wherewith men wrap their shanks lack the divine
Trademark of individuality.

Pride of creation forces us to wear
Some very devilish fancies. But, for once,
Disavow your art and be an artisan.

I would become that apparition.

That is conception—you compose the dress.

Behold me there—in petto. I shall not

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

Gossip about this sacrifice of genius,
If you but copy that—and copy well.
Green—dark. And there—maroon, touched with a shade
Of—vespers. Search the shops for yonder cloth.
Make me as splendid as the Swede. You sense
The rest? Enough, then. (*Meditating.*) Sweden's
monarch hangs
As the protagonist of a comedy—
A daring one, if critics happen in
Upon it. Alfieri will concern
Himself about the tragedy. (*Exit tailor, taking notes.*)
'Tis done.
The critics now. Love has a will for wit.
The gods invented it, and still they laugh
At old contrivances.

(More precipitation in the shape of the mischievous ORLANDINI, entering surreptitiously, with his wife lingering in the rear. ALFIERI turns from spreading himself before the painting.)

A critic?—so soon?

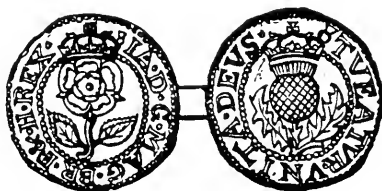
ORLANDINI.

The Countess has rejoined his majesty.

ALFIERI.

Discriminating critic—better still.

(CURTAIN.)







The Second Act

A BAGPIPER

PLACE—*Florence.*

TIME—*Early evening of the same day as preceding.*

SCENE—*Hall and music room in the palace of
COUNT ALBANY, the English Pretender.*

We look out through the portico, over the valley of the Arno, as the twilight of the Italian evening grows dim to the point of darkness. Within, the lamps of the palace have just begun to burn. Speaking of the dermatisation of human souls, Sir Leslie, we eaves-droppers do not require to come provided with scal-pel and lancet, for there is a place wherein the soul un-sheathes itself—the soul would suffocate without it. For every man there is an atmosphere of candor, and the mincing of the law may not invade it nor the sticklers of propriety defile it. Only we caves-drop-pers of the pit may glimpse the society of friendship. Here shall we find the PRINCE within his home—and what is better, the home within his home, whereof his household itself is not a part. You have heard that the PRINCE is a musician, have you not? Ob-serve the old-fashioned piano at the right of the salon and the violoncello leaning upon the stool. Do you suppose I do not know COUNT ALBANY's favor-ite apartment when I see it? Observe for yourself

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

the bag-pipe of green tartan and silver trimmings on yonder wall to the left, the arms of Great Britain, the escutcheon of the Stuarts and the portraits of James II and his son, James the Pretender. The PRINCE will be here, mark my word.

This is merely a servant, with a tray of wine for his evening guests. An Italian servant, at that. Do you not recall what the SIGNORA said? And here is another native of Italy escorting a visitor. DOMENICO CORRI, the musician. Did not I tell you the PRINCE would follow shortly?

DOMENICO CORRI.

HIS highness—is he ready to receive
His music-master?

SERVANT.

I shall wait upon
Him, signor. Whom shall I say?

CORRI.

You know me not,
Who have attended on his majesty
So many months?

SERVANT.

I am a stranger, sir—
New to his household, as are all his men.
The count has brushed off his old servants.

CORRI.

Strange!
What means this antic of his fancy—eh?

SERVANT.

Thinking is not my duty. And besides,
My tenure is by no means certain, sir.
Already he is wavering in his will,
Under the pleas of the Scotchmen.

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

CORRI.

Scotchmen? Ah!—

I understand. You need not tarry longer.
Tell him Corri is arrived. (*Exit servant.*) Ho! ho!
Another of these tales. They all accord
In their determined malice to depict
Him monster. I, his friend, will promptly guess
Good reasons in defense—rather, indeed,
Be wrong in the invention of excuses than
Truthful in slander. If the Scotch are gone,
'Tis that the Scotch offend his resolution.
They that repeat this tale therein accuse
The man of manhood. —Curse the Highlanders!
(*Sits at the piano and his fingers ramble over the keys.*)
Who could speak ill of one so musical?
Surely I know the prince—except he veil
Beneath this tender art some tuneless thing,
Spectres that have no bards to sing the lays
Of their uncanniness. Some dance of death—
Nay!—lest my love arraign his highness for
Hypocrisy, as one confronts a knave
At prayers or chances on a highwayman
Kissing his children. What! Hypocrisy
For smugglers to love music?—if while they love
Their song they are not longer thieves but men?
Divinest art! The sabbath of the soul!
The purge of evil! Be the trysting-seat
Of love and wisdom. Let the battle's smoke
Tarnish the visage, and the lying court
Grace o'er with placely smiles its countenance:
Music is candor, though 'tis always kind;
Quiets the heart without deceiving. Rage
As rage it will, 'tis rage at ugliness.
The instrument in tune?

(*CORRI ceases playing and takes up the violoncello, testing the strings as the PRETENDER enters.*)

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

CHARLES.

The strings are pitched,
Domenico?

CORRI.

I find them absolute.

CHARLES.

I pitched them ere you came. An absolute
Monarch am I.

CORRI.

Each tone is at its post
To do your bidding. Will you take command?

CHARLES—(*Spurning the instrument*)—

No more, Domenico. The king must say
Good morrow to his giddy memories,
And muster all his fancies out of service.
Just now I have endured the argument
Of a Scotch emissary, come from the camp
Of Highland waiting-men lately discharged
For the sole crime of being Highlanders.
Lord! How they in the name of Scotland plead
For reinstatement. Once that was a virtue,
But—no more: I wear the badge of life.

CORRI.

I understand. Is music Scotch as well?—
That you reject its further ministry?

CHARLES.

Aye, Scotch, if you please. 'Tis not so much of the ear
As of the heart that music gnaws at purpose.
Let them that have no aching yesterdays
Appease their simple hearing with melodious juice
Wrung from the strings: you have seen peasant lads
Sipping at grapes. And they, perhaps, that hold
Music an art—and thence, philosophy—

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

May wash their thirst at the cool fountain head
Of classic water: that you've seen as well.
But Albany can neither sip nor quaff—
Can only drown: or, if he cleave the waves,
Be swept far from the shallows of the world,
Beyond the moorings of the hour, to swoon
Upon the surface of his memories.
Music is life, and life is memory—
His vital element.

CORRI.

 This you forswear
That you may live today?

CHARLES.

I was at fault, unfaithful to my own,
My memories so full that they forgot
What is. Louisa— Ah, turn not away,
Domenico. My thoughts are yours—attend.
The queen have I been lost to, she to me.
She her devotion offers, but finds none.
This I have thought ere now at idle times,
But lacked the understanding and the will
To doff the past and wear the badge of life.
The thing is changed: behold the emblem.

*(He lifts the fold of his coat and reveals LOUISA'S
brooch.)*

CORRI—*(Moving to go)*—

Then,

Let me not tempt your majesty to eat
This lotus fruit. Corri will not oppose
Art to propriety. But—I swear the Muse
Is innocent of intrigue. She is pure,
Nor even a king may hold her up to scorn
For shameless blandishments, the purchase price
Of his surrender. I resent the charge.

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

CHARLES.

Nay, Corri, I am still a cavalier,
From whom such slander is as far dissuited
As blasphemy of heaven. Music? Stay—
I drink a toast to Music, though I dare
No more embrace her. (*Pours wine.*) What shall I propose?

CORRI—(*Taking glass*)—

The truth—always the truth. Music abides
The eternal truth.

CHARLES.

You're right, Domenico.
"Eternal" is the word. Do not rebuke
Me for my finite weakness. *Life* compels,
Aye, captains every will; musters, arrays,
Flogs into battle, lashes mutiny,
Stigmas the coward; and courageous souls
May not escape the finite. Music is life—
But 'tis eternal life, warring with men
And measurable deeds of men.

CORRI.

The toast!

CHARLES.

I shall propose it. To the voice of God,
Upon whose face, they say, none looks and lives.
His voice is fatal, too, for who may hear
The sacred measures and not cease to breathe
The discord of the world? The voice of God!—
Drink, Corri, drink. —Leave me my dissonance.
(*They drink, CORRI sipping but half of his goblet's contents, while the PRETENDER drains his last drop and looks into the bottom of the glass. The vessel might have been larger.*)

CORRI.

Strange argument. I never heard before

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

That Music rivaled woman in the field
Of love-making. In general, I find
Song the confirmed ally of passion.
The Countess then cannot approve of song?

CHARLES.

What? Hold—not that. When song goes forth to woo
Some vagrant recollection, serenade
Sea nymphs and war maidens—that—that concerns
Another attitude of the will. (*Pours wine.*) No more:
Do not dispute the matter. Come. Again.
The toast. Drink you to the consummate blossom
Of human destiny, the flower that would
Forget its roots, but tugs and twists in vain;
Or, if it should be severed from its root-hold,
Withers within the hand that plucked it. (*They drink.*)

CORRI.

Ah!—

Still a condition. (*CHARLES pours again.*) Are not conditions slander?

CHARLES—(*Hurriedly drinking*)—

Slander, indeed, if they befoul the tongue
To stain with malice Music's chastity:
Just as you say, Domenico.

CORRI—(*Sitting at piano and improvising softly*)—

The king
Aspires in metaphor beyond my sphere.
I am a man. My comprehension lacks
The pinions of your heaven.

CHARLES—(*Taking a last sip of wine*)—

Did you ne'er
Spur forth into the vaulted distance?—hug
The mane of the tempest?—leap upon a crag?—
Vaunt to the wingless altitudes of vision,

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

Laughing the heart's sail full of swift delight?—
Or, bending lower, feel the wing-ed foot
Hushing its tread upon the airless air
Of strathspey dance?—drink kisses from the cup
Of loyal virtue?—or with phantasy
Span caverns of philosophy and lore?—
Speed courage to the tower?—aye, and exult
In kinship with great kings at Scotland's hour?
Did you not these?

CORRI—(*Turning from the piano*)—
I knew it; yes, I knew it.

CHARLES.

What knew you, Corri?

CORRI.

That you were—musical.

CHARLES.

I am, I am. I cannot put it off.
Souls may have shadows, too, that follow them.
I plead the shadow, though it censure me
Th' excuse.

CORRI.

Why "shadow?"

CHARLES.

Name it a perfume, then;

The sense-provoking witchery of the brain,
Wherein conviction triumphs over conscience;
The hovering odor of an unblemished rose,
Daring inseparable from the glands
That quicken and inspire the innocence
Of beauty. You are right, Domenico.
I answer to the indictment, and the king
Shall never more shake off the perfumed thing.
Play on, and I shall join you. First of all
A duty. (*Touces a bell.*) Aye, a happy duty, too. (*Enter an Italian servant.*)

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

Call back my Highlanders, my serving men,
MacDonald and MacGregor and the rest.
Send for them all.

SERVANT.

I—do not—understand.

CHARLES.

You lack-wit fellow! You shall go to school
To a sharp master, want of wages. Go!
Out of my house! I'll have my Highlanders. (*Exit*
servant.)

Play, Corri, play. The Scottish lilt. Sound A.

(*Behold the aged PRINCE as he lifts the violoncello into his affectionate embrace—not the embrace of a leering rouse, but the caress of a parent for his only daughter. The music master voyages into the prelude of the strathspey, the PRETENDER listening intently the while for the time of the solo. CHARLES has touched his bow to the instrument. The A-string has snapped, and CORRI has ceased to play. ALBANY is in a rage and dashes the violoncello to the floor.*)

Hell! Curse upon you! Grovel at my feet.
Is majesty asunder? Thou—a thing—
A lying sinew? Minister of fate!
No enemy, but worse: a flattering friend,
Who casts his moorings at the very clutch
Of fortune. Loyalty! What instrument
Shall God's anointed skill his hand to, that
It warp not quickly with the rapture of
Its own happiness? Hell hath appointed rats
To build their burrows in the porch of thrones.
And it was always that, Domenico.
The tension of a cord some worm may gnaw,
Until the homage snap. All destiny

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

Hangs by an instant's slenderness. Ah, God!—
And did I live to see a slender day
At Derby? Rather, I should have marched
Alone, and let my tame, remitting hounds
Skulk to their fastnesses. (*Rings bell; servant enters.*)

Let it be heard

Upon the housetops that no Highlander
Again shall serve Charles Edward, monarch. Go—
I hire you now for life; the others, too. (*Exit servant.*)
Enough of Highlanders! (*Drags down the bag-pipe
from the wall and hurls it to the floor; also
dashes the wine set from the table.*)

CORRI.

Be calm, my friend.

CHARLES—(*Fiercely*)—

Call me "your majesty."

CORRI.

Your majesty!

CHARLES—(*Tenderly, following a pause*)—

Your majesty! So sweet, the fevered ear
Would drown itself in drapery. Of food—
'Tis irony to pallid lips. Of dreams—
A spectre. Supplication—blasphemy.
Only a Highlander could say the words,
Domenico. You need not say them.

CORRI—(*Aside*)—

False!—

He is Charles Edward now.

CHARLES.

Your majesty!

Up, innocence. (*Raises violoncello.*) Across the sea
I am
No longer. (*Examining the broken string.*) Shreds of
royalty! (*Lifting the bag-pipe.*) And
you—

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

I do not hold you guilty. 'Twas the wine—
But I'm recovered. Play, Domenico. (*Offers CORRI the pipes.*)

CORRI.

I plead myself unmusical—at that.

CHARLES.

At this? You are Italian—the cloak
Of one opinion: that all the world
Outside of Italy is barbarous.

I'll answer you. (*Prepares to play the bag-pipe. Enter a Scotch servant, whom CHARLES views with some embarrassment.*)

CORRI.

I've heard the argument.

SERVANT.

Two gentlemen attend, your majesty.

CHARLES.

Who be they?

SERVANT.

French, by their dress, your majesty.

CHARLES.

Lord hang the French! Ah—(*With a sigh*)—Show them in. (*Exit servant.*)

CORRI—(*Moving*)—

Good night.

CHARLES.

Remain, Domenico. Their claws are sheathed.

Amuse yourself. (*Hands him the bag-pipe.*) They will not tarry long.

I shall discourage parley, for I know
Their mission, and it cannot offer safe
Credential to the court of my desire.
I've braced my heels against persuasion.

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

Ah, by the way, (*Indicating bag-pipe*) that was a gift
to me—

Kilmarnock's widow—.

(*Enter DUKE DE CHOISEUL and MARSHAL DE BROGLIO.*)

What hour did you say?

BROGLIO.

At eight, your majesty. The duke is here.

CHARLES.

The minister? I am most happy, sir.

CHOISEUL.

And I the more to see your grace so young.

I— Not alone?

CHARLES.

Nobody—a musician.

BROGLIO.

But—

(*CHARLES whispers to CORRI.*)

CORRI—(*Aside*)—

Noone—a Scotchman. (*Exit with bag-pipes,
mimicking a Highland piper.*)

CHOISEUL.

Aye—so young.

Your shoulders—look, de Broglio—and a stride
To measure attainment by.

BROGLIO.

Your eye is sure,

The glance direct, the thread of it so tense
That vulgar fancy might discern the toe
Of acrobatic equilibrium
Poised on the reach of its perception.

CHARLES.

Stay--

What does such image argue?

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

CHOISEUL.

You are young.

CHARLES.

Pooh! Idle wit! If you profess me young,
To blandish youth with shining sophistries,
Your argument will but convince me old.
God sends down lies as servants of the truth.
If now you come with gifts of opiates,
Enthralling memory, do not disturb
The apocalypse you bear me. Sleep is kind. (CHARLES
places his hands over his eyes.)
Blind-folded eyes see Scotch blue bonnets—more:
And tartan pageantry—legions—a crown.
Unhood his winkers. Where's the throne? (*Points.*) A
stool!

CHOISEUL.

Deception? Villainy!

BROGLIO.

Why should we deceive?

CHOISEUL.

We are your friends, believe—

BROGLIO.

Not luring cheats

To smell you to a precipice.

CHOISEUL.

France, too,

Should lose.

CHARLES.

She lost me from her border once
By making it a crime to serve me.

BROGLIO.

True.

But that which is a crime today may be
A virtue by tomorrow night. The clock

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

Strikes more than hours. What is the time of morals?
Noon. Of statecraft? Midnight. Times are changed.
The treaty's broken, and another king
Hanovers England.

CHOISEUL.

Witless as a ball.

CHARLES.

To shuttle him to Herenhausen—bah!
'Twould be the end of the game, were Stuart there.

CHOISEUL.

Good!

BROGLIO.

Bravo!

CHOISEUL.—(*Gesturing toward James II*)—

'Tis as though yon portrait answered.

BROGLIO.

It has the ring of a whole dynasty.

CHOISEUL.

Besides, this Brunswick's ministers are galled
Both in and out—mosquitoes and short breath.
They have no joy. Democracy of Wilkes;
America's scant thralldom.

CHARLES.

What a fool,

This bundle-worded German! Does he speak
In English?

CHOISEUL.

George? Well—yes. He piques himself
On that nativity.

CHARLES.

Bastard Englishman!
Great God!—and do my subjects cringe to that?

BROGLIO.—(*To CHOISEUL*)—

The devil's working.

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

CHOISEUL.

May God bless the devil!

CHARLES.

What is your offer, gentlemen?

CHOISEUL.

London.

CHARLES.

London! A name that means brave men, and ships
With magic rudders; swords that have not lurked
In tarnish; hurried plant of feet, but soft
As the insinuations of a wanton;
Counsel of eagles—how the marches lie,
Of head-lice—numbers; bar-cats—how defense
Brawls flaws in discipline; of barrack-dogs—
What leader's boot sets them to yelping. And,
If these we have, I grant you then we'll find
London our London and our king her king.

CHOISEUL.

I'll show you. Here. (*Produces a packet.*)

CHARLES.

Just letters? I have built
Thrones of them—woven royal wreathes—and hailed
Myself king in the most flamboyant fires
That letters ever made.

BROGLIO.

'Tis quite enough.

CHARLES.

Some fretting Jacobite feels on his brain
A blister, and he pricks it thus. What says
The ooze?

CHOISEUL.

It runs in good example. (*Reads to himself.*)

CHARLES—(*Impatiently*)—

Well?

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

CHOISEUL.

It comes from Spain.

BROGLIO.

What more to wish—?

CHOISEUL—(*Interrupting* BROGLIO)—

Let me—

CHARLES.

No, no! Let me. Has Spain ten thousand men?

CHOISEUL.

They shall be had. You must to Madrid first,
And greet the premier. There you will find
The soil for planting. Seed it well, and, mark,
With watering of fine words 'twill grow you men.

BROGLIO.

Ten thousand's but an ace of what you get.

CHARLES.

An empty cup! How know you this?

CHOISEUL—(*Extending the letter*)—

Read that.

Spain's government will pay an army for
A leader. Then, all that you give to boot
Is—not to be ungrateful when you sit
At Whitehall.

CHARLES—(*Reading*)—

“Land on Scotland's shores—” (*Aside.*)

My head

Could bring some fifty thousand pounds one time.
The sale was never consummated. Nay,
Exile, the type of purgatory, to
Be shut from life and not admitted quite
To death's full recompense, the limbo that
Is not of earth or heaven, exile: this
Partook of, traded in my flesh. A slave!—
Not to a task, but to the want of it.

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

The heart's removal from its bosom! Love
That wanders like an airling the cold void
Of place! A Highland thistle's alien wing,
Restless for root in its own soil again!
And, to be loathed! To have my absence prized!—
A royal leper, whose own children may
Not smile upon him, lest the smile shall carry
Taint to the breath! "Unclean—approach me not!"
(*Reading.*) "If but the prince can show himself as fair
"As when he fought at Gladsmuir—"

BROGLIO—(*To CHOISEUL*)—
Stuart's alive.

CHOISEUL.
I see. That is not all.

CHARLES.
They trust me not.
Even while they plead, they fear. They halt behind
Conditions—whether Charles carries youth's edge
Beneath his palsied sheath. Rust of old age
They question, creeping on the adventure's risk
Like children that amuse themselves with terror,
Skirting the lip of a black pit a time
And scampering off in the laughter of great deeds.
Charles shall unmask himself. Off with you, years.
What say the men of Scotland?

CHOISEUL—(*Producing another letter*)—
Here they speak.

CHARLES.
Are friends of mine still there?

BROGLIO.
King George now asks
Himself that question. His doubts are real,
More poignant than your own, since Brunswick's skiff
Skims closer to the issue.

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

CHARLES—(*Taking letter*)—

Let us see.

BROGLIO.

His ills are many. Every bone of his
Dominion aches and cries for drugs.

CHOISEUL—(*To BROGLIO*)—

He reads.

We'll give his mind its unpersuaded field.
Our aiming cannot drive the arrow more
Direct than 'tis itself a-flying.

CHARLES.

Sirs,

The patient future seems to 'wait me still.
Nay, mark you, seventy times seven times
Has Scotland's forgiving loyalty forgiven
My tardy coming. But her king is dead—
Has passed into the life of Italy.
Another world, from which is no return.
Henceforth I have erased the past, and I
Forbear, as well, to write my name upon
The parchment of the future you ordain.

CHOISEUL.

We do not hear your speech, nor will we hear.
Your tongue is talking, not your judgment, which
Must use the language of deliberation.

BROGLIO.

'Tis not the answer of a Stuart.

CHARLES.

It is.

CHOISEUL.

Ah, no. Shut not the gate.

BROGLIO.

We are not thieves,
To trespass in and steal your character,

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

If you retire to bed and leave the hinge
Unturned against our project. Let it pass.
Tomorrow's sun will make it clearer. Indeed,
It is my rule never to register
A vow save in the presence of the sun.
The reason mounts to its meridian
With the ascending day. In this respect
Am I one of the Sun's idolaters,
Content with worshiping a shining orb
That casts no mystic shadows.

CHARLES.

You are right.

Tomorrow I shall answer. And meanwhile,
In order to be fair with France, I shall
Count over all my reasons, one by one,
Unprejudiced.

CHOISEUL.

Good night, your majesty.
I leave for France tomorrow. Broglio
Remains in Florence. You must go disguised
And carry letters which I shall prepare—
Against your yielding: that you understand.

BROGLIO.

Good night.

CHARLES.

Stay, both. Some friends are gathered
here
For a night's pleasure. Join: you're of my court.
I name you now. Fear not, they will not know—
Festivity is poor at guessing.

CHOISEUL.

But—

What say you, Broglio?

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

BROGLIO.

Put off your fears,
Gay duke. Remain, and be more gay.

CHARLES.

Enough.

(Touches bell.)

You're travelers. *(To servant, entering.)* Attend these gentlemen
Into the tiring-room. I'll send some wine,
And join you later. *(Exeunt the two visitors with servant.)*

(CHARLES looks out through the portico, over the river Arno.)

The evening's very balm
Breathes in the Highland tongue. *(Turns.)* Your majesty!

(CHARLES sits at the piano, and as his fingers ramble over the keys, he speaks:)

If a' ye breathe, my Highland mou',
Be but the breeze of Inverlochen,
'Twill swell my bosom up in praise,
Wi' lusty shout, o' kilt and stockin'.

If a' ye smell, my Highland snout,
Be but the brae wi' green upon it,
My heart will sniff the fragrance of
The battle twixt the braid and bonnet.

If a' ye see, my weeping eyne,
Be but the towers of Edinboro,
My soul will dance at Holyrood,
And march to London on the morrow.

If a' ye hear, my stooping ear,
Be but the name o' Bonnie Charlie,

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

We filabegs will up by night
And scoot the reds sa smart and early.

(CHARLES rises hastily and passionately addresses the several portraits of his ancestors.)

Dinna ye ken that, dearies—what the bairn
Was ta'kin' about? Na are ye corpses yet,
When a' your blood fa's like a cataract
Into the waif's heart.

(Turning.) —A heart tempestuous!
I am my own denominator. Since
The world accounts all men at the lowest price
It must by compulsion pay, I will exact
Each lingering farthing of the niggard purse.
The world will dole my worth out with a Jew's hand—
But here I rise. The price! My courage boasts
The lineage of action. Courage!—'tis
The mother of men; and cowards only breed
From a desire to be at peace with the world.

(Meanwhile, the music of the soiree is heard through the palace. As the PRETENDER stands, LOUISA enters the portico in company with ladies. LOUISA laughs.)

The queen. Nor yet a queen. Would it were so!
Would it were doubly so!—that she were queen,
First of my heart and afterwards my realm.
My realm is least to me—and she, too, laughs
At memory lingering o'er its losses. (LOUISA laughs.)
Hark.

That I have never conquered. If I lack
The strength to lead love captive, why should I
Entice it with possessions or a throne?
First may I rule today, and then aspire
Unto the sceptre of tomorrow.

(CHARLES takes the brooch of LOUISA from his breast and holds it to his lips. As the COUNTESS and ladies

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

*withdraw from the portico, he turns and follows
LOUISA with extended gaze.)*

Wife! (Exit.)

(CORRI enters with the count's bag-pipe and replaces it
upon the wall. He stands contemplating the instru-
ment.)

CORRI.

A barbarous tongue—with no interpreter.

Music and I are natives of one race:

You were not born in Italy. Here's her child. (Takes
up the violoncello. Exit.)

(Presently there enter SIGNOR and SIGNORA ORLANDINI,
the DUKE and DUCHESS OF BRACIANNO and FABRE,
together with other guests. CLEMENTINA WAL-
KINSHAW creeps in among the company and is later
discovered in modest retirement in an obscure cor-
ner. All the guests carry hands of cards and they
discuss the game of whist. SIGNOR ORLANDINI and
the DUCHESS OF MONTE LIBRETTI drift together to
the foreground.)

ORLANDINI—(To the DUCHESS)—

Persuade me not. Whist—whist! Its very name
Describes my disposition of it—whist! (Snaps his fin-
gers.)

DUCHESS.

But everyone must play it, else they be
Thrust into outer darkness. 'Tis the thing—
Just come from England.

ORLANDINI.

England?—That's enough.

How do you say it—trump? I call for cups?
Lead swords? Ah, my opinion is quite fixed.

DUCHESS.

A reason.

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

ORLANDINI.

I have two that should convince
Night day.

DUCHESS.

And they?—

ORLANDINI.

The game's from England, first :
This—whist. A capital complaint. And then,
No game of cards is relish to my taste
That can't be played in company of ladies.

DUCHESS.

Fie on you! 'Tis a modest game.

ORLANDINI.

Indeed!

DUCHESS.

And must the men swear oaths at every hand?

ORLANDINI.

You jest.

DUCHESS.

—That I may drive you out of jesting.

ORLANDINI.

Then, the game compels much thought. The mind
Must reckon every throw, and hold accounts.

DUCHESS.

You're right.

ORLANDINI.

One cannot play and talk, too.

DUCHESS.

Humph!

What's that to do with ladies?

ORLANDINI.

Ask the duke,
Your husband. He will tell you. What I like

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

Are basset and primero—highly-tight'!
I love the company of Eve too well
To play at—what d'you call it?—whist.

DUCHESS.

Sweet Adam!

Your wit's as naked as the body of
Your prototype. I will not talk with you. (*Retires.*)

ORLANDINI.

She's gone to ask her husband to explain. (*Follows.*)
(*There is confusion in the rear as ORLANDINI arrives
among the ladies.*)

DUCHESS OF BRACIANNO—(*Parrying with her
cane*)—

What means of torture choose you how to die?
Some retribution!

VOICES.

Hang him.

ORLANDINI—(*As cards fly in his face*)—
Call a truce.

VOICES.

A spy!

ORLANDINI.

A shower of Spartan arrows.

VOICES.

Spy!

(*As the confusion dies down, the SIGNORA ORLANDINI
and MISS WALKINSHAW are discovered in the right
foreground.*)

SIGNORA.

My husband dies of soberness unless
He's in a mimic battle. I should be
A widow else. I feed him skirmishes
And banter, lest I lose him.

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

MISS WALKINSHAW.

Well for you.

Would that the Countess knew my father thus.
He might be happy, but she will not play
The game he chooses.

SIGNORA.

And what game is that?

MISS WALKINSHAW.

The game of dreams. Hers is the game of life.
(*Laughter in the rear.*)

ORLANDINI.

Eat, drink, be merry, kings and queens.

VOICE.

And knaves.

SIGNORA.

Heed not their noise, my child.

MISS WALKINSHAW.

I do not.

SIGNORA.

Say—

Advise her.

MISS WALKINSHAW—(*Shuddering*)—

Whom? She knows my parentage.

I am a sin—a sin.

SIGNORA.

Tut, child.

MISS WALKINSHAW.

Indeed:

A sin I may not let disturb her peace.
It shrinks within the shadow of my birth,
And battles with itself. When she is here,
I speed away, off to my casement.

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

SIGNORA.

Ah—

She loves you not?

MISS WALKINSHAW.

Less than my father. Him
She pities. Me—. Her sympathies afford
Dainties enough to keep her thoughts appeased
Without devouring the black bread of hate.

SIGNORA.

A sorry creature, that loves no-one.

MISS WALKINSHAW.

Ah!—

The very kernel of it. *Does* she love?

SIGNORA.

Propriety in every act. She loves
No man—perhaps ambition. I should hold
The Countess true.

MISS WALKINSHAW.

And I. 'Tis that that makes
Me think her strange, so very strange. (*Confusion.*)
She comes. (*Exit.*)

VOICES.

We'll have a song.

DUCHESS OF M. L.

By Orlandini.

VOICES.

Good!

ORLANDINI—(*To the foreground*)—
My voice is ship-wrecked.

DUCHESS OF M. L.

Out with the howitzers,
And thunder all your guns to bring relief.



Fabre's Portrait of Louisa

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

ORLANDINI—(*Coughing in imitation of a gun*)—

I'm sinking fast.

DUCHESS OF M. L.

Should teach your voice to swim.

ORLANDINI.

Why not to fly?—or flutter, like a tune
From young Scarlatti?

VOICES.

Fly, then, fly!

ORLANDINI.

I can—

My feathered choristers—tomorrow; but,
Tonight we'll pigeon it at home. Your grace—

(*All turn and discover the COUNTESS OF ALBANY standing in the entrance leading to the portico.*)

LOUISA.

My joy is in the pleasure of my friends.
Make me more joyous by more merriment.

ORLANDINI.

More? We encourage mirth to greater pitch
Already than becomes demeanor. More?—
A riot. Since the quiet of the house
Is now in splinters. More?—an earthquake.

LOUISA.

Ah,

My moderate-minded signor, you it is
That quells as magically as you arouse.
Master of ceremonies, Britain's court
May fear no tempest, having you at the helm.

ORLANDINI.

She baits my vanity.

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

DUCHESS OF M. L.

He was to sing,
But the lark drowned his note at sight of you.

VOICES.

Pray, let him sing.

DUCHESS OF M. L.

Yes, bid him sing, your grace.

LOUISA.

The signor? Stay—he cannot sing. His voice
Is in his ears, his hearing in his mouth :
Repeats forthwith to what he listens, harks
To his own utterance.

ORLANDINI—(*Posing*)—

A ducat to

The first that batters me with yonder stool.
I count a cracked skull merciful beside
This gaiety.

DUCHESS OF M. L.

You're not to die until
The executioner pleads that we leave
A spark for him to pinch out.

ORLANDINI.

Mercy, then.

A quarrel with Amazons, if prayers avail
No respite, must atone with death.

VOICES.

A prayer!

Come, let him pray.

LOUISA.

He cannot pray. The gods
Know not his voice.

DUCHESS OF M. L.

Indeed. And should they hear,

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

They'd fly for refuge in confusion
Behind the thunders.

ORLANDINI—(*Moving*)—
Flight's the only way.

VOICES.
Stay, stay!

ORLANDINI.
Where is the Count of Albany,
The king? I'll find protection there.

VOICES.

Stay, stay!

LOUISA.
His majesty is sleeping. I'm the queen.
Come, kiss my hand. (ORLANDINI *obeys*.) Now let the
rabble cease.
By this decree I grant immunity:
England, Scotland and Ireland will resent
The voice of him that dares to call you fool.

ORLANDINI—(*Bowing*)—
Most gracious majesty.

DUCHESS OF M. L.
Let us return
To the card-room. We'll start another game.

ORLANDINI.
Not I.

DUCHESS OF M. L.
Stay, then. (*The company begins to retire.*)

SERVANT—(*Entering*)—
Abbe Caluso and
Count Alfieri.

LOUISA.
Bid them enter. (*Exit servant.*)
(*Addressing ORLANDINI*) Stay.

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

(Now is it clear why the portrait of Charles XII of Sweden has vanished from the Uffizi gallery and from the ken of the art cataloguists. An Italian tragedian has breathed life and animation into its painted soul and it has gone forth into the world of men. In any event, it has paid a passing mortal visit to the first society of Florence—whither, it makes no difference. If this be resurrection—to put off the garb of the immortal arts for the fleeting haberdashery of a season's fashion—I will change my religion. ALFIERI'S intriguing fancy favors me with the only solution of a vexed question. The young dramatist enters in the pattern of the warrior king's painted attire, followed by the ABBE. The merriment of the dispersing company dies out in the galleried distances of the palace.)

LOUISA.

Ah, father, you have brought my happiness
Home with your presence. Count, I welcome you. *(She
observes ALFIERI'S dress.)*

CALUSO.

God's blessing on your house.

ALFIERI.

God's blessing, too.

LOUISA.

Appoint me duties for your pleasure—both.
The company is flocking to the cards.
The Count—the king—will join us presently.

CALUSO.

I will not cloy, but oversee the game.
What do they play?

LOUISA.

The game is whist. 'Tis new.

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

ALFIERI.

From London. There I played some hands of it
On my last visit.

ORLANDINI—(*Aside*)—

He has played it, too.
I'll call for his opinion later.

LOUISA.

Good!

Your pleasure, then?

ALFIERI.

I'll hold the place that finds me.

LOUISA.

You'll find yourself in many places ere
You sum acquaintance with my company.

ALFIERI.

Place am I reckless of. 'Tis time that taunts
My being. Life must cease; world has no edge.

ORLANDINI.

The Count's a traveler.

LOUISA.

Yes: 'tis my regret
My house was not ordained in seven days,
Like God's creation, patterned out in seas
And lands, in nations, mountains, climes; instead
Of halls and porticos. Stay—you may ride
Your horses up the great staircase and down.

ALFIERI.

I'll sleep—

ORLANDINI.

Oh, ho! No, no!

LOUISA.

Your choice.

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

ALFIERI.

—And dream:

Chained in the garden of Beatrice, chained
With roses and dark hair.

(LOUISA turns away. *There are roses in her hair.*)

ORLANDINI.

Ho, ho! A jest.

(*Aside.*) This Charles the Twelfth jests in philosophy.
(*To ALFIERI.*) Critics do not concern themselves with
dreams.

LOUISA—(*Herself again*)—
Enchanting slumber—

ORLANDINI.

Abbe, I am fond
Of whist. Let's go. The ladies play it, too.
That spices playing. (*Exeunt the ABBE and ORLANDINI.*)

LOUISA—(*To ALFIERI*)—
Surely you could not sleep
In the attire I saw a soldier wear
Some years ago in—Sweden? Soldier, you?
Hay-ho! The drums would wake you.

ALFIERI.

Say not that.

I execrate all martial music.

LOUISA.

So?

ALFIERI.

It is the song of despots.

LOUISA.

As for that,
A chain of roses and dark hair has proven
A despot's garland. Yes—the world is old,

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

And roses and dark hair are tyranny
In the economy of poets only.
But you, a poet, you discourse against
Sceptres and drums, and let the garlands rule!
I—might have been a queen—

ALFIERI.

Dispute me not.

I have eluded tyrants in my time.

. LOUISA.

Pray, do not fear. I pledge my honor that
I will not be a queen. No tyranny
Shall spring from our brief meeting. Nay—I swear
I shall be serf to quiet your concern.

ALFIERI—(*Aside*)—

There's welcome in her eyes. (*To LOUISA.*) I am at ease.
Only my thoughts are silent, while they feel
Grandeur, not mutiny.

LOUISA.

Ah, speak your thoughts.

I shall be subject to the majesty
Of—Sweden.

ALFIERI.

Alfieri's thinking does
Not caper in this garb.

LOUISA.

A handsome king!

What, then, about? You will not garment it—
Your meditation—in a somber hue,
To turn me mournful when it ventures forth?
Speak, but be cheerful.

ALFIERI.

I assure you that.

A joke it is I'm meditating on,

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS

An equivoque, so mercilessly rich
Of humor that the walls would wrinkle laughing.

LOUISA.

Tell it me: I was nourished on a laugh.

ALFIERI.

The scriptures speak of Jacob and his wells.
He pierced the gravels of Judea that
His flocks might water. We'll suppose a well
Was here—I'll pace the story for you—, and
Another here: two wells in the same field.
If Jacob drew from one, he drew from two,
Since they, as children of one parent fountain,
Obeyed the level of their parentage,
Receding, swelling—

LOUISA.

True, I understand—

In sympathy. Go on.

ALFIERI.

In Jacob's time

This was the decree of Nature—physical
And—spiritual. When one swelled with joy
Or was depressed with sorrow, 'twas enough
To swell or to depress the other.

LOUISA.

True.

ALFIERI.

But let some modern Judah dig him wells;
We'll say two wells within an area,
Hardly more distant than, say, you and I.

LOUISA.

So near?

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS

ALFIERI.

No farther. —What if we should find
The sympathy of waters had abated,
One rising at the flood, the other sinking?
Suppose it. There's the joke.

LOUISA.

Calamity!

ALFIERI.

You sense the joke.

LOUISA.

Calamity's the mirth
Of your philosophy?

ALFIERI.

If this nightmare
Has come to pass, what feeble prayer is left
But laughter? Laugh I now.

LOUISA.

It is not so.

The tides of love respond.

ALFIERI.

Speak for yourself.

And you say that, you who art not a queen?—
To me who am not king? The tides of love!
You that, whose blossom's not the rose upon
Your hair?—whose garland's something more than this,
Your raven diadem? You?—whose mind leaps
Like spray in the sun, when somehow kindred waves
Balance or merge?—here on the heedless sea?

LOUISA—(*Aside*)—

My heart will hear it, though it dare not. (*To ALFIERI.*)

Come—

The air is heavy. To the portico.

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

Firenze's lights think for me. Tell me there
What works you labor on.

ALFIERI—(*As they retire*)—
Labor's the word.

(POET and COUNTESS turn toward the portico and there
gaze over the city as they pursue their conversation.
And now appears CLEMENTINA WALKINSHAW, en-
tering softly and circumspectly by way of an obscure
door on the right.)

MISS WALKINSHAW.
Where is he now?—my father? (ALFIERI and LOUISA
are discovered.) Ah! Look not.

Surprise has bitten unwarily my sight,
Which did not see. So swiftly, like a blade
Of lightning splitting the crannied shadow of
A wall! My eyes have sinned an instant's sharp
Iniquity, escaping ere 'twas born.
I am that: a witless transgression
That did not grow but leaped, a fugitive
Black hell-root in the night, the Satan-sent.

(ALFIERI becomes indiscreetly animated.)

Ah, that! Love fascinates my eyes, my soul,
For sin was ordered from its black recess
To spy on love. Thence do I recreate.

(LOUISA laughs softly.)

Malignity, I crush you! I could love.
I love you, Custom's mother, for that smile.
Shine back—two smiles, a lilies' field of smiles.
I'd hate you else, my tears would scorn your heart.

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

Indeed I think 'twas God that drew me here,
To teach me thus the beauty of my birth.
If with the eyes of hell I looked on love,
My own unpitied, bleak fatality
Would then be barren of God's recompense.
All, all in one, I compass in my soul
Love's wafture of the planets and the seas.

ALFIERI—(*Turning.*)—

No more.

LOUISA.

Of the remaining years—

(*CLEMENTINA is discovered.*) You here?

What is it, girl?

MISS WALKINSHAW—(*Timidly*)—

My father—where is he?

LOUISA.

How can I know? He is not here. Go, search
His cups. Perhaps among the dregs, like a
Wet fly, you'll find him, dripping towards the brim.

MISS WALKINSHAW—(*Shrinkingly*)—

I go, then. (*Aside.*) Love loves everyone but me.
(*Exit.*)

LOUISA.

What were we saying?

ALFIERI.

Nothing. Words.

LOUISA.

No more?

ALFIERI.

Stay—words that had been speech, if they were strewn
All in a witless heap, and set to phrase
By Ariosto.

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

LOUISA.

Why not sort them out
Yourself, Count Alfieri, poet?

ALFIERI.

Hold!

Call me a clod—parched: yearning to sustain
The vernal sprouts once rife in Tuscany,
But scarce succeeding to revivify
The roots of Dante's language.

LOUISA.

Speak the truth.

ALFIERI.

But twice I thought myself a poet: once
When by the sea I mourned the distance, wept
To span the taunting reaches of mind-compass;
Once when I beheld a man shot down
For crying "Death to the king!" (*Laughter is heard
coming from the card room.*)

LOUISA.

Ah, tell me more.

'Twas there you left yourself yonder above
The Arno, winding also, secretly,
Into the distance of the sea.

ALFIERI.

The porch?

—No more. What I should say next would fatigue
Your approbation.

LOUISA.

Nay, proceed. My wish.
My husband once commanded; I command.

ALFIERI—(*Following a pause*)—
One day I met—a woman.

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

LOUISA—(*Laughing with a show of disappointment*)—

I had curled
My thought up in a cushion's lap to hear
A thing quite new.

ALFIERI.

It was not new, I grant,
For long before I had known two others.

LOUISA.

Oh!

You loved them all?

ALFIERI.

Their minds I quite despised.

LOUISA.

Despised their minds? Hay-ho! I understand:
'Tis not Count Alfieri, poet, that
You speak of. He will some day wed a bride
With brains for dower.

ALFIERI.

The gods should send her soon.

LOUISA.

The woman?—she that was the last—where now?

ALFIERI—(*With a shrug*)—

Dead—married—in a convent.

LOUISA.

Far removed,

Indeed.

ALFIERI.

I wrote some verses. Yes, my first.
I'm unforgiven still. I wasted them—
To her I wrote—upon a barren ledge.

LOUISA.

Go on. You wasted them.

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

DUKE OF M. L.—(*Entering*)—

Ah, here you are.

The players sent me for you.

LOUISA.

Presently.

Tell them I'll slay them all when I begin.

DUKE OF M. L.—

Your pleasure. (*Exit.*)

LOUISA.

Come—you wasted them.

ALFIERI.

I did;

But even waste has uses—feeds a root,

Perhaps. And so with me. Ambition mossed

The rest, and that was all.

LOUISA.

Have you no verse

About you?—some thrice used, perhaps, that you

May waste on me?

ALFIERI—(*Rummaging in his pocket*)—

I have—no verses.

LOUISA—(*Not to be deceived*)—

Come.

ALFIERI.

They have not been thrice seen, nor twice, nor once,

By other eyes than mine. A sonnet. New.

LOUISA.

Ah, do not waste it, then.

ALFIERI.

That could not be.

I would not waste your hearing on it. (*Produces a paper.*)

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

LOUISA.

Read.

ALFIERI.

Wait. I must look— (*Reads to himself.*)

DUKE OF M. L.—(*Entering*)—

Importunate! They say

“No longer.”

LOUISA.

Quick! Go say I’m coming.

DUKE OF M. L.

Good! (*Exit.*)

LOUISA.

Well? Read.

ALFIERI—(*Destroying manuscript*)—

Imperfect! Travesty upon

Too fair a poem!

LOUISA.

Stay—oh! Murder! Oh! (*Gathers up
scraps of manuscript.*)

ALFIERI.

I slew only a counterfeit. No crime
To stab pretense.

LOUISA—(*Poutingly*)—

They will not patch.

ALFIERI.

Indeed?

Rebellious words are worse. The one complaint
I swore against the rhythm. You’re learning now
The art of poetry.

LOUISA.

For shame!—to rout

A sweet creation back to chaos. (*Scattering the torn
bits.*) Fly!

A formless void.

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

ALFIERI.

I'll muster them again, (*Seizes her hand*)
When love has taught me beauty's secret. (*Laughter within.*)

LOUISA—(*Drawing away*)—

Go.

They wait for me. I join them, but not you.
I ask it. Ah, what do I?

ALFIERI.

Let all time
End here. Ask what you please.

LOUISA.

Pray, turn your back
On levity. Good night!

ALFIERI.

Good night!

LOUISA—(*Faltering*)—

Return—.

Ah, do not you forget: more verses. Stay—
The theatre condones. The custom grants
Me gallantry. My cavalier you are,
My public escort. I shall wait. Adieu. (*Exit.*)

ALFIERI.

I go. And gladly, as a captive, borne
Away in chains of roses and dark hair.
To be commanded! Ah, what more? It grows.
Love's candor is not the bud, it is the bloom. (*Exit.*)

(DUKE DE CHOISEUL and MARSHAL DE BROGLIO enter.)

CHOISEUL.

I have not seen him since our parley.

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

BROGLIO.

No—

Nor I, nor I. Remember how he spoke:
"I'll send some wine, and join you later."

CHOISEUL.

Ha!

A drinking bout! He must be got away
From this frivolity. A glimpse of war
Will harden him. Look to your duty, sir.

BROGLIO.

Leave that to me. If Spain arrays her troops,
I will array a king to lead them. (*Laughter within.*)

CHOISEUL.

Hark.

More voices taint their breath with the disease.
Go, guard his highness. I shall not remain.
Keep me advised by letter. Fare you well. (*Exit.*)

BROGLIO.

A knave may win at cards, but there's a game
Bolder and played with men. Leave that to me.
The sound's approaching. Who's regaled himself?
A stalk of barley typifies the sway
Of drunken royalty. Let majesty
Reel from its throne, it cannot climb again.

(*BROGLIO withdraws into a secluded position as FABRE and ORLANDINI enter, bearing up the struggling, tottering form of the DUKE OF BRACIANNO. They are followed by the DUCHESS OF BRACIANNO and others of the company.*)

DUKE OF BRACIANNO—(*Intoxicated*)—

You do me grave injustice. Hold, I say.
You have not heard but half.

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

DUCHESS.

Lead him away.

DUKE.

Where is the king? I wish to bid my host
Sweet slumber. Plague me not. —And I shall go
Myself to sweeter slumber, when 'tis done.
The king! Say, kingey, where are you?

DUCHESS.

The king—

Can no-one speak for him?

BROGLIO—(*Approaching*)—

The king withdrew

From this apartment—look—an hour ago;
And when he left, he spoke of sending wine.

DUKE.

Ha! Wine, wine, wine. More wine, good wine, sweet
wine.

DUCHESS.

Take him away.

DUKE.

The king!

(*The COUNTESS OF ALBANY enters hastily and with a
show of nervousness.*)

LOUISA.

Who calls the king?

Count Albany is coming.

(*CHARLES enters, erect and severe in deportment.*)

CHARLES.

I am king.

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

DUKE.

Lord bless your majesty. You should have joined
Old Bracianno in a glass of wine. (*The DUKE is led
away.*)

CHARLES—(*Taking a goblet from the hand of
MONTE LIBRETTI*)—

Is this his joy? (*Smells.*) My favorite Burgundy.
There is much sharper wine. I've drunk of it
Tonight. It does not so inebriate
That madness banters wisdom to come out
And sport with phantoms. It adjusts the wit
In cool demeanor—(*Eyes on LOUISA*)—else it mocked
and swore,
This furious instant, at its own black hue.

(*The PRETENDER pursues LOUISA with his gaze.*)

It is the wine of hate, the wine of stealth,
Of intrigue's prowess—laughter of deceit.
In short, 'tis poison.

—Take your ruddy wine.
It is not foul enough to slake my thirst.

LOUISA—(*In confusion*)—
Your highness!

CHARLES.

Ah, you understand my gaze.

LOUISA.

Has yonder girl been lying?

CHARLES.

More and more!
Your conscience answers quickly. Yonder girl
Is innocent of malice.

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS

LOUISA—(*Angrily*)—

'Tis enough.

Scum of your old amours shall not befoul
My draperies. I will not hear. My ears
Have caught the gout a-listening to your thoughts.

(LOUISA turns on her heel and comes face to face with the ABBE CALUSO, who straightway engages her in solemn conversation. The PRETENDER stands alone, stricken as it were speechless and sullen. ORLANDINI enters and emerges from the company into the foreground, meeting the DUCHESS OF MONTE LIBRETTI.)

ORLANDINI.

Where is he?

DUCHESS OF M. L.

Who? Pray, listen.

ORLANDINI.

I must bring

An expert's judgment to confront you with.

DUCHESS OF M. L.

I cannot guess your meaning.

ORLANDINI.

Whist. The Count.

Is Alfieri nowhere?—withered short? (*Glances among the heels of the company.*)

CHARLES.

Whom do you seek?

ORLANDINI.

Count Alfieri. I—

CHARLES.

The stranger? True! My royal nose can scent

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

Your purpose even by the thing you seek.
He is not here. Why do you search him? I am
As certain of it as that Louis Last
Is not in heaven.

*(LOUISA indulges in a sudden burst of laughter, and turns
from CALUSO.)*

CALUSO—*(To CHARLES)*—

Let me befriend at court
Count Alfieri's blameless gallantry.
Like shadow-painted, spectral images,
The king's implacable afflictions shroud
The forms of beauty o'er with ugliness.
Erase the past—

CHARLES—*(Spurning the advance)*—

The past? The present, as well.
I shall forget and bury past and present.
The future skips before me like a maid,
Running from school to scatter what was learned.
I'm ready, Broglio. A month—no more.
'Tis to prepare. Come, hail your monarch, friends.
Stuart's the name of kings.

*(Another laugh from LOUISA is cut short by a gesture of
rebuke on the part of the ABBE.)*

VOICES.

Long live the King!

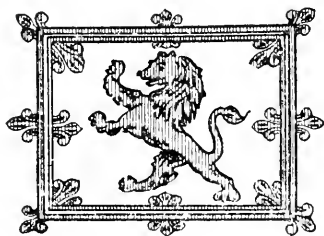
*(The company disperses noisily, leaving the PRETENDER
alone with the MARSHAL DE BROGLIO. The PRINCE
stands in the portico, meditating in the direction of
the COUNTESS and her guests.)*

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

BROGLIO—(*In the foreground*)—
Who drives the winds of social circumstance?
Who heaves the bosom of every living purpose?

CHARLES.
What thing shall marble that fair laugh to stone,
Or melt it, save the vanity of a throne?

(CURTAIN.)





The Third Act

A CONVENT

PLACE—*Florence.*

TIME—*Afternoon. One month has elapsed.*

SCENE—*A street with a Servite nunnery in the background.*

Now are we to encounter our acquaintances in the street, Sir Leslie. Out in the open air—sub Jove, as old Horatius puts it—where men bear testimony by witmess of the sincere and liberty-loving elements. Hold—perhaps I am mistaken in the atmosphere. Is this a convent that overlooks the scene?—casting restraint upon the testimony of men? If you would know a man, Sir Leslie, ask him the nature and dimensions of his religion. Clothe or uncloth his body as you please, each man is possessed of some such spiritual habiliment, and he will describe it minutely per invitation. Living and living's ambitions fly to the winds, and in the light of his own punctilious recital the man is revealed.

Who are these that approach upon the thoroughfare? Nuns bound for the convent, led by their chaperone, the ABBESS. This is the holy house to which they

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

belong. And our frail little friend, the PRINCE'S morganatic daughter, following close upon their heels. Why is she so pale and why has she chosen black for her attire?

MISS WALKINSHAW.

WHITHER, when love repulses? If the earth
Sends her pure souls to heaven, surely Scorn,
The incompassionate, must halt without.
A colony of heaven on this shore,
This distant region only half explored
By angels—shall I shelter here, or turn? (*Retreats and promptly reconsiders.*)
I cannot. (*Kneels upon the steps.*) Mother!

MOTHER SUPERIOR.

Someone calls.

MISS WALKINSHAW.

'Tis I.

MOTHER—(*Descending*)—
Sad girl. Thy need—what is it?

MISS WALKINSHAW.

I know not.

So black the world, no form is visible
Above the prospect of my weeping.

MOTHER.

Come

And pray. Enter with me. Give me thy hand.
The soul's a darkened forest: prayer is light.

(*Exeunt within.*)

(*ALFIERI enters and paces up and down before the convent, gazing upon the structure with the air of one who might be trying to judge the inside of a man's heart by the wrinkles of his surcoat.*)

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

ALFIERI.

This was the place agreed on—convent walls.
We chose the symbol of confess-ed death.
The world some worship till the world attaints
Their first rebellion; then—why, then they die.
Not by disease, for 'tis their souls expire—
Within these walls. No matter, since their souls
Go from the world and in this ante-room
Of heaven bide the digging of the grave.
Fight, say I: die not till the sepulchre
Is all in readiness, and mount the tomb's
Staircase with backward step and face the crowd.

(In the enthusiasm of his imagination, the dramatist climbs backward up the convent stair, as if retreating with stubborn resistance from a superior force. His right hand half reveals a dagger drawn partly from its scabbard beneath his cape.)

Back, monarch! Back, tradition! I will gnaw
Your hands with a sharp tooth. Away! I'll fall
Of my own crumbling: touch me not. *(Laughs.)* —I
win.

The phantoms cower before me, and my brain
Seeks pleasanter engagement. Swish! They're gone.
Now may I read again all that she writes *(Produces letter.)*

I now must live on letters, for today
Adjourns my courtship to an uncertain time
And distant place.

(Reads.) "When shall we each to each
"Speak our true thoughts again? I tell myself
"I shall not lose my poet, since his art
"And he are one and messages may come
"In art's apparel—cannot poets write?"

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

"I tell myself I may expect the stride
"Of angry verse—angry in his behalf—
"To vanquish distance and to rescue me
"From dungeons. I tell myself—."

Oh, Lord!

She tells herself, and tells herself, but tells
Me nothing. What am I to learn? Read on.

"His madness aggravates, and every day
"He passes me with sullen speechlessness,
"As though his queen had murdered his regrets
"And left him unbefriended. I can see
"All the dead things that he would brood upon
"Waiting for burial, lacking his consent."

This dotard! I am angry at the years
That have polluted with such mastery
Her purest charms. I shall not rest at night
Until I know she sleeps beyond his house.

"Tomorrow's well-contrived conspiracy
"Promises freedom. We have spent the hours
"Of our sweet month within—ah, what constraint
"Of public scrutiny! An interval,
"And liberty shall reunite us—where?
"May all go well with me; farewell to you."

(*ORLANDINI has just entered, observed but unobserving.*
ALFIERI hastily folds his note and approaches the
newcomer from the rear.)

ORLANDINI.

The thing is going well. The Countess comes,
Protecting her protector. Which deceives
The other in pretense? I sometimes think
Them lovers. (*Moves away.*)

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

ALFIERI.

Stay.

ORLANDINI.

Ah, Alfieri.

ALFIERI.

Done?

ORLANDINI.

It is.

ALFIERI.

The plan works well—in the first stage.
The second will sequent it, natural
As logic.

ORLANDINI.

Proof enough 'twas your device.

ALFIERI.

I am her friend. The abominable dog
Shall whine for his kingly kennel without ears
To hear his plaint.

ORLANDINI.

Your enmity contrives
Hard metaphors for one of his gray hairs.

ALFIERI.

'Tis only proper language to declare
That a dog whines. I'll pity his gray hairs
When their hoar-frost has ceased to chill my friend.
Resentment cloyes my sympathy.

ORLANDINI.

Alas!

The prince loves you no better.

ALFIERI.

What says he?

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

ORLANDINI.

He blacks you with a chimney's angry soot—

ALFIERI.

No doubt.

ORLANDINI.

—And leaves you thus: that even your
friends

Might pass you on the Ponte Vecchio
And say, "There goes the devil."

ALFIERI.

It would be

Unfruitful to expect of malice that
It spring from other than malicious soil.
—And may I occupy a box with her
At the Pergola? That is black, as well?

ORLANDINI.

As servitor gallant, sharing his wife's
Devotion to the opera—

ALFIERI—(*Parenthetically*)—

—While he

Is bandaging his feet to catch the wine
That oozes from his toes—,

ORLANDINI.

—he hates you most.

ALFIERI.

What says he?

ORLANDINI.

That your wit would crack a nut
With worms in it.

ALFIERI.

Not that. Surely not that;
Else 'twould have split his skull ere this. What more?

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

ORLANDINI.

He said—. No, no; I am no tale-bearer.

ALFIERI.

Unstring your tattling tongue. What said he else?

ORLANDINI.

He prayed the gods would crown him king, that he
Might bauble you his fool.

ALFIERI.

What regal grace!

I'll prove not senseless of his favor. Say
To his most gracious majesty that I
Shall pray devoutly to become a fool,
That I may choose him king. —About his wife,
My lady, tell me this: how much of the
Vile cess-pool splashes her bosom? I can take
Strides too far-reaching to abhor his murk,
If it but leave her pure.

ORLANDINI.

He taunts her—yes—

In secret, and within the hearing of
Myself and others.

ALFIERI.

Choke the monster! God!

No lie can murder like the fertile lie
That stoops the highwayman and clutches the
White throat of chastity. I'll strike him cold.

ORLANDINI.

Hold, hold! The street! Your rage is suitable
For a closed room's vituperative.

ALFIERI.

Bah!

What god's decretal set this anger in
The compass of the heart, and named it not

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

Sweet music? 'Tis the organ-master calls
This war of drums, the fury of deep pipes,
Else is all honor discord.

ORLANDINI.

Rage you, then.
Roar like the billows, since tempestuous
Oceans can no longer wreck the venture we've
Embarked in. Echo is all yours. —The affair
Gives promise to outdare your boldness. See. (*Points
right.*)

ALFIERI.

Stay. Do not leave me till I tell you this:
Ducal annoyance summons me at once
Back to Turin. So long as I shall hold
My title by the patronage of state,
I owe my residence to Piedmont. Well,
Such is not Alfieri, who is free,
And who's in love, besides—to make it worse.
I have discovered this expedient:
To settle my estates upon my sister,
Julia, stipulating a return
Of a just sum—say, an annuity.
You understand?

ORLANDINI.

I do.

ALFIERI.

Farewell, then.

ORLANDINI.

Stay—

Surely we meet again before you go.
Adventure has made friends of us, I think,
Who should not break their common interest
Abruptly. It is something to have fought
Beside a soldier, or contrived beside

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

A schemer, or secured beside success.
A Spaniard and a Neapolitan
Together caught a rascal stealing cheese,
And they were friends for life recounting it.

ALFIERI.

Well, then, come to my lodgings and report
The outcome.

ORLANDINI.

I'll be there. For me awaits
The token of a traitor's smile—on these. (*Exit.*)

ALFIERI—(*Peering*)—

His royal cane is so uncommonly
Behind in walking—that explains delay.
God save the queen! What is this thing called love?
Lust, adoration, pity—all or one.
I choose the second. —That I partake thereof
He must not guess by my proximity. (*Exit.*)

(*The MARSHAL DE BROGLIO enters circumspectly and surveys the street from end to end.*)

BROGLIO.

Tomorrow finds my mission at an end,
The pilot puts his vessel forth to sea
And leaves it to its voyage. Some regret
Will go with me from Florence that my stay
In the society of her monuments
Was measured by so brief a duty. —But
The thing goes as we planned, and Spain's apprised,
Prepared. Demons of strategy be praised!—
Domestic peace has hovered down again
Upon his household, and the consort loves
Her lord once more. He is the key, and I
Shall hold the key. That is imperative.
Thank God that I was born a politician!

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

(Laughs.) I look with too emphatic gaze on this
Ambition. Images desire enthrones
Persist with the reality of stone,
Ruling men maniac, idolaters,
Unless, it may be, faith is turned to works
And striving love is knighted genius.
At least, it will be said that Broglio
Stood by his purpose to redeem a king.

This is the spot the reincarnate monarch
Will pass at three; the hour is threatening.

Clouds prophesy a storm. My cape is light.
A place of holy garb. 'Tis not the first
Adventure of this kind religion's cheek
Has gazed immodest on.

(Peering into the distance.) 'Tis Albany.

(As the MARSHAL DE BROGLIO retires into a secluded corner, members of the PRETENDER'S party appear by way of the main street. The DUCHESS OF MONTE LIBRETTI and the COUNTESS OF ALBANY are in advance.)

LOUISA—*(To DUCHESS)*—
The flounces and the draperies she wears
Are scarcely native to her temperament.
A costumer's a friend that measures thoughts
As well as length of figure. Thus I have
My moods draped o'er my person. Only two
Prevail in general, but I temper them
With lace and jewels or their abstinence.
Behold me caring not to laugh. *(Her dress is subdued and simple.)*

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

DUCHESS.

Indeed,

It seems the facets of a diamond
Declare its thoughts and so prescribe the setting.
I've seen the visages of soulless jewels,
And others, more like you, that have revealed
Grave meditations through their brilliancy. (*They retire.*)

(*Enter ORLANDINI and the DUKE OF MONTE LIBRETTI.*)

ORLANDINI—(*To DUKE*)—

The British army was defeated, and
Burgoyne, their general, reports the rout,
To the great consternation of the throne.

DUKE.

Those savages—I mean the Americans—
Make war like Europeans,—seem to show
Quite civil methods when they fight.

ORLANDINI.

And since

Their declaration of divorce from Britain—
Oh Lord!—somehow I give them victory.

DUKE.

I pray not.

ORLANDINI.

Stay—should not a bride be freed
From an unchosen wedlock?

LOUISA—(*Approaching*)—

Come; this is

The end of our perambulating.

DUKE—(*Answering ORLANDINI*)—

No.

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

ORLANDINI—(*Arm to LOUISA*)—

With me. (*To the DUKE.*) On this colonial matter we
Shall not agree until a battle solves
The argument. As for the bride's dispute,
We prove that presently. (ORLANDINI *retires toward the*
convent with LOUISA.)

DUCHESS.

Where is my duke?

DUKE.

Beside his winsome duchess, where he should
Be always. (*They recede and CHARLES EDWARD enters*
with SIGNORA ORLANDINI.)

CHARLES—(*To SIGNORA ORLANDINI*)—

Ah, these works of nuns—they tire
A body's legs a-getting to them. What
Consists the exhibition of?

SIGNORA.

O, lace,

Embroidery, ceramics—

CHARLES.

Do these nuns

Amuse themselves so?

SIGNORA.

It applies their hands.

Your eyes are quite discerning—

CHARLES.

True.

(*As they turn toward the convent, BROGLIO approaches.*)

BROGLIO.

Your grace.

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

CHARLES.

Good day, sir. Ah, 'tis Broglio. (*To the SIGNORA.*) I come.

(SIGNORA ORLANDINI retires as the two men draw aside.)

LOUISA—(*On the landing of the convent stair*)—

A stalwart purpose—why should it disown
Repentance, when this last of looks upon
The last of kings startles my lachrymals
And softly mourns my slain ambition,
Which died of its own choosing? Luxury,
Indeed, to wash the heart in old emotions;
And what a thing it is to count the hurts,
When they have quitted us, and sorting them
Like kernels in the hand, to see if there
Be not a pearl among them. Fare thee well!
The deed was heaven's. (*Exit within.*)

(*As LOUISA enters the convent, followed by the DUCHESS OF MONTE LIBRETTI, the door closes sharply in the faces of the DUKE OF MONTE LIBRETTI and ORLANDINI. The latter two descend the stair.*)

CHARLES—(*To BROGLIO*)—

The king is ready. This infirmity
Is but a twinge of fancy.

BROGLIO.

And the queen—?

CHARLES.

Knows nothing. She is not advised. Tonight
My leaving will be broken to her. She
Shall tell my friends that I am gone to Rome,
To visit with my brother Henry, the
Cardinal of York.

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

BROGLIO.

'Tis settled, then; and well.

CHARLES.

Quite right, 'tis settled, for the instrument
Of purpose has been forged with fervent flame.
Bear to the German cur a challenge. Say:
"Meet at the Tweed." And if the thief inquire
Who seeks the throne of England, let him read
The language that their blood writes—my reply.
Well may his German witnesses translate
The crimson cipher!

ORLANDINI—(*Approaching*)—

These discourteous nuns
Severed the door between me and the ladies,
Nor would let me pass.

CHARLES.

The devil! You
Are somewhat tender in your mastering
Of project.

ORLANDINI.

Mastering, indeed! The door
Is latched.

CHARLES.

Leave that to Albany. The king
Of England enters, if it cost a crown.

(*The PRETENDER stumbles with difficulty up the stairs and
knocks at the door, first with his fist and later with
his cane.*)

My summons mocked at? Listen. Is the ear
Of this religious house numbed by deceit?
Again. (*The door opens.*) The deaf are healed.

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

ABBESS—(*Appearing*)—

You scar the cheek

Of pity with your blows.

CHARLES.

My consort—she,
But a thought's parting since, entered this door.

ABBESS.

Indeed, the Countess is within. Her grace
Has taken refuge with the church. Disturb
Her not.

CHARLES.

From whom? From what?

ABBESS.

From self. (*Exit.*)

CHARLES—(*Descending*)—

From me,
From God—God's king. She trespasses on hell.

ORLANDINI.

It is by order of the government.

CHARLES.

You, too? I mark the treason. A knave's trick,
To smuggle from me half my majesty!
You of this nest of plotters? Hence! Away
From my discomfiture, lest you appear
To mock at honest pain with a rogue's presence.

ORLANDINI.

I am not the traducer. Others—

CHARLES.

Out!

A tattling tongue wags in a knavish mouth.
I'll listen not to such—away!—but search
My own accusation. This play-writing count—

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

ORLANDINI.

The count is posting towards Turin.

CHARLES.

Enough.

The devil works a-wing.

SIGNORA ORLANDINI—(*To her husband*)—
You schemed this thing.

ORLANDINI.

Not I.

SIGNORA.

A tool's thin edge! Sharp, but a tool!
I will not nurse you more. I want a man.

ORLANDINI.

Though I be unmanned, still my legs can run—
(*Aside*)—To Alfieri. (*Exit.*)

SIGNORA—(*Relenting*)—

Husband, husband, stay. (*Exit.*)

CHARLES—(*Apart*)—

Was not I born one of Suspicion's
Nephews? My wakeful aunt has found a new
Contrivance, a procuress in new shape.
The assassin hides his waiting in his glove;
The courtier sets his smiling teeth before
His spittle-nurtured and dissembling tongue.
'Twere easy to unhide the unripe thrust
And shatter the pale grin of hypocrites,
But when a shameless woman slinks behind
These holy ramparts, all the gates of hell
Shall not prevail against them.

BROGLIO.

Your majesty!

Religion will accuse her back again.
Let this not trouble you.

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

CHARLES.

Rather it spites
To swifter action. Pray, reserve advice.
The king is done with counsellors for wings:
This insult is my strongest pinion.

(MISS WALKINSHAW runs from the convent, kneeling
before CHARLES.)

MISS WALKINSHAW.

Sire!

But let me feel your hand upon my head.
Heaven has sent against me the one eye
Whose vision withered me. —My desert breath
Has learned to thrill on sorrow, and my throat
Would choke upon a draught of happiness.

CHARLES.

Rise.

MISS WALKINSHAW.

I came here that my soul might lean and lean
Upon some outward power. I could not stand,
And, kneeling, my knees ached when she arrived.

CHARLES.

The one you speak of—?

MISS WALKINSHAW.

She, the Countess, father.

Ah, sire, forgive me if I say my soul
Has driven me out, for there the Countess prays.

CHARLES.

Forgive you? Aye, I honor you. Besides,
The king rewards his daughter. Stand you up,
Duchess of Albany. Here—wear this ring.
France shall legitimate that title, and
Myself your birth. Noone shall disrespect
You, daughter.

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

MISS WALKINSHAW.

Ah, the sun is shining. See,
It blooms a splendid rose among the threatening
Thorns of the tempest.

CHARLES. 'Twill not rain today.
The time is full of suns. The king cannot,
Like Pharaoh, be discomfited in darkness
By yonder supplication. Broglia,
Tomorrow the appointment holds. Be satisfied.

BROGLIO.
And the disguise—?

CHARLES. Arranged. The rumor, too.
I've gone to Rome: but go you there in truth,
To acquaint my brother Henry with the venture.

MISS WALKINSHAW—(*Aside*)—
The love my father missed I now forgive.
It leaves a larger cranny for my love.

BROGLIO.
The deed is planted.

CHARLES. And the idiot
Shall suck his thumbs at Herenhausen. Mark—
Vesuvius raged again the other day.
He is the timely metaphor of slumber—
Such as a righteous cause keeps: not forever.

BROGLIO.
Splendid!

CHARLES.
I will not fail. The king has found
Redemption in a daughter. Come with me,
Duchess of Albany. My arm. Adieu.

(CURTAIN.)



Henry Stuart, Cardinal of York



The Fourth Act

A MANUSCRIPT

PLACE—*Rome.*

TIME—*Afternoon. Ten days have elapsed.*

SCENE—*Large receiving room in the house of HENRY STUART, Cardinal of York.*

If I were an artist, I should want this room for a picture. But I should spread my red CARDINAL, on where yonder chair sits. I trust that you may behold our CARDINAL in it presently, that you may agree with the purpose of my fancy. Some men are said to be made by their dress, but I have known others to be made by the walls that surround them or the bed in which they sleep. One may commune daily with a deserted fence-post in the midst of a field and grow great upon it. My CARDINAL must have visual environments: this spacious mantel set in the wall on the right, and massive andirons to guard a fire-place in which there is no fire; an elaborately gilded clock mounted by a figure of St. Augustine; walls of deep shades, and tapestries that are always relating strange anecdotes of history; and this window on the left to overlook a garden, with heavy corded draperies to exclude too much of the light that makes suggestive fancy hideous; all these with other little things. Warmth, all told, that is not frivolous but majestic. Kindly, but luxurious. Profusely invit-

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

ing, but not garrulous. Here is where you will find my CARDINAL, Sir Leslie,—when I become an artist.

Only a servant. Now for our own unpigmented prelate. He has come to take his red place in yonder chair, fresh from his siesta, no doubt, judging by these yawns.

THE CARDINAL OF YORK.

HIS reverence, Borgia—has he visited
The house today?

SERVANT.

He has, your reverence,
But finding it your napping hour he would
Not wake you. (*Exit after handing the CARDINAL a letter.*)

CARDINAL—(*Yawning*)—

No importance. Slumbering
Shows little courtesy toward God or man.
God speaks to sleep within sleep's own domain,
And man can wait. (*Inspecting the letter.*) For me.
The day is warm. (*Sits and opens the letter.*)

What was I thinking of before I dozed?
"Monsieur de Broglio"—the French seal. Hum!
"And may it please your reverence, the king,
"Your brother, the most gracious sovereign
"Of Britain—" Now I recollect what I
Was thinking of. "—has matters of grave import
"To transmit to your benign—" Hum! "—ears."
It was the wife of Charles engaged my thought.
The Countess will be here this very hour.
Ah, well, I care not if this writer of
Dull tragedies attend upon her here,

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

Under my roof: the roof is everything.
Assuredly this poet may not read
His pagan fancies to the ears of nuns,
For to rehearse them in a cloister—Ugh!
Within the mansion of a cardinal
Were decorous by contrast. Since she came
To Rome, Louisa frets the sanctity
Of her conventual life. I understand. (*Reads.*)
“The king is in his vigor—” Still a boy!
If her accounts be just, I shall approve
A separation. Let her prop her mind
With learning from the poets. (*Yawns.*) Poetry
Is not so languid as this laziness.

(*The CARDINAL turns again to the letter in his lap, reads it through and rises to observe the hour by the clock on the mantel. He strikes a bell and a servant enters.*)

Welcome the writer of this—what’s his name?—
De Broglio—when he presents himself.
Call me at once. (*Exit servant.*)

So Charles will interfere?
Who is this Broglio? A lawyer. Ah!—
Wherefore sent he to France for an advocate?
Are laws of wedlock all digested—drawn—
In Paris? Now, the cardinal may not
Harken too tenderly to arguments
Louisa puts. Lawyers have certain rights.
Almost the too-kind-hearted cardinal
Had given his countenance to her retreat.
Still better to have both contentions,
Lest Charles be the abused. (*Servant enters with card-tray.*)

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

SERVANT.

Your reverence.

CARDINAL—(*Taking a card from the tray*)—
Admit her. (*Exit servant.*) We shall see. God wit-
ness. Yes,
Perhaps with God's aid, love may grow again.
A clumsy instrument—man's hand—to build
The fibre of so fine a mesh! It breaks,
And shreds of sympathy revolt their cleaving.
God only may appoint the manner of
Love's happening. (*Enter the COUNTESS.*) Sister
Louisa, rise.
God's peace be with you.

LOUISA.

Ah, your reverence,
Your smile is grateful to me. May your joy
Be ever confident as my recompense
In trading wedlock for a holy life.

CARDINAL.

Body and mind are in accord with nature,
Soul with God.

LOUISA.

May nothing interdict
That fond alliance.

CARDINAL.

Sit, Louisa. Rest.
Your coming is of key with my own thoughts.
See that you stay in tune. I have some news.

LOUISA.

For me?

CARDINAL.

The key—remember. 'Tis for you.

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

LOUISA—(*Rising*)—
The prince is here.

CARDINAL—(*Laughing*)—
No, no. A lawyer.

LOUISA.

What?

CARDINAL.
A lawyer from the prince to intercede
With me against you.

LOUISA.
And you were too deaf
To hear his plea?

CARDINAL.
I did not hear him speak—
Quite true; nor see him. For he has as yet
Not passed the door. He comes at five.

LOUISA.
'Tis clear,
I may not entertain—

CARDINAL.
How is it clear,
My sister? Are your eyes more keen than mine
At fathoming myself?

LOUISA.
Why, then, this man—
This lawyer?

CARDINAL.
'Tis the courtesy of my house
That welcomes him.

LOUISA.
You do not wish me here.
This interloper will afflict your mind

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

With fears of papal censure and deceive
Your holy duty into doubt of me;
Such doubt, indeed, that friends of mine cannot
Attend me in your house.

CARDINAL.

This dramatist?

LOUISA.

Count Alfieri—yes. Today he comes
To read again his play "Antigone."
And others I expect who will assist.
The Duchess Zagarolo plays the role;
The Count, the Duke of Ceri and myself
Will act besides. Ah, I almost forgot
Grimaldi, Spain's ambassador. That's all.

CARDINAL.

Which do you most expect, Antigone
Or this—Antigone's creator? Which?

LOUISA.

The Count's a man, his work is poetry.
I have no other answer.

CARDINAL.

Love you him?

LOUISA.

Love you a woman?

CARDINAL.

Tut! My vows abhor
The sense of loving you conceive.

LOUISA.

Ah, good!

And this you apprehend my marriage vows
Abhor.

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

CARDINAL.

I love all heaven's creatures.

LOUISA.

And

I love all heaven's wisdom—and—

CARDINAL.

—The Count.

LOUISA.

I love him not. Oh, how can artifice
Measure the genuine? Behold the church
Denominating love a painted post,
Whereas it is a tree. If it grows not,
The trunk is dead, however beautiful
The canon paints it. There's a duty left,
To emancipate the stump from its pretense.

CARDINAL.

No, no: not that. The church would trellise vines
Over the lifeless thing.

LOUISA.

Indeed! I, too.

But see the issue of my gardening.
My vines were torn, distressed in brutal ways—
You know my meaning: social tendrils, friends,
Who will cling loyally, though daily scandal
Should blight them. So I moved my arbor.

*(LOUISA looks from the window on the left and her eyes
discover a suggestive situation.)*

See,

You have a garden trellised full of vines.
(You should have told me, for I love green things.)
There the deep shades reflect in silence on
The glinting poems that the sun writes in.

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

Ah, such indeed is the Arcadia
Of interlacing spirits! And behold,
Your garden has bright apples, mellowing.
They are ripe souls, benign of circumstance,
Whose one religion is their ripening.
You do not taste the stunted ones. They are
Not souls at all—God's cripples; and for them
Heaven's a necessity. So, while I live,
Louisa's soul will sip of other souls
Possessed of flavor, bringing appetite
To transubstantiate the body of
Holy communion.

CARDINAL.

Hold, do not blaspheme.

LOUISA.

But still you will it that I ever eat
Of one attainted apple, die thereon,
Withal it writhes my tongue and aches my soul.

CARDINAL.

This Alfieri is an ugly man.

LOUISA—(*Impulsively*)—

You know him not. He's fair. His brow is high.
His chin—. (*The CARDINAL laughs.*) Ah, well, Count
Alfieri's not
Too striking. No, not an Apollo, but—

CARDINAL.

I have not seen the Count. I will not say
He's more ill-parted than the rest of men.

LOUISA.

I have seen scores that I held handsomer.

CARDINAL.

His plays are dull, at any rate, they say.

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

LOUISA.

Yes, very dull and very ponderous.
He carves a brain out of a mountain-top.

CARDINAL.

And all his mountain images he sets
Before you?

LOUISA.

True.

CARDINAL.

What part, then, do you play?

LOUISA.

The ear, the thought that trembles when he reads,
The breath that halts, the look that—only looks.

CARDINAL.

Do not you praise him often?

LOUISA.

Silence is

The only praise I utter, and he says
He hears it.

CARDINAL.

I am satisfied. Perhaps
Jehovah in his splendid solitude
Bewailed himself an outcast, sorrowing
For want of kinship. If he then ordained
An all-beholding soul and called it Man,
Empowered to know and love him face to face,
Leaping from truth to truth, nor starkly struck
With the dumb agony of wonderment;
Much more, indeed, are finite gods sustained
By the countenance of understanding.
Profound may be the voice, but measured by
The depth of hearing. It is well to serve
Utterance with comprehension. Sister, receive

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

Count Alfieri here—within my house.
Extend him peace.

LOUISA.

He's waiting at the door.

CARDINAL.

Ah! What astonishment! We'll summon him. (*His
reverence moves to ring the servant's bell.*)

LOUISA.

Seek no formality. I'll fetch the count.
He is retiring and you'll find him more
Content than spirited at our neglect. (*Exit.*)

CARDINAL.

How the affairs of heaven wait upon
The will of women.

(*A servant enters and the CARDINAL takes a card from a
tray. Exit servant.*)

Ah! De Broglio.

My brother's advocate shall not behold
The queen at her devotions.

(*As the CARDINAL moves to retire, he is met by LOUISA
and ALFIERI entering.*)

LOUISA.

I have brought him.

Count, my brother, Cardinal of York.
This is my dramatist.

ALFIERI.

Your reverence.

CARDINAL.

I welcome you. My benediction.
We shall be friends in time, but by your leave
I now attend on duty, not on pleasure. (*Exit.*)

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

LOUISA.

The lawyer! 'Tis the lawyer waiting him.

ALFIERI.

What lawyer? Tender queen, something disturbs
Your spirit from its accustomed majesty.
When you're aggrieved, your subject mourns for you,
The smiling princess of the realm Louisa.

LOUISA.

Ah, count, it is as though I were a child,
Frightened at nothing—the creeping of a hinge—
Until your coming calms me.

ALFIERI.

And I will hunt it with a taper. Where's
The ugly hinge that haunts the silence?

LOUISA.

Him,
The aged Albany, I fear.

ALFIERI.

That hinge
Chafes in its dotard rust. A noisy while
It creaks, until corroding bites it silent.
The hush—I hear it coming.

LOUISA.

You know not.
His agents are all active. (*Points within.*) There is one.

ALFIERI.

A lawyer. Ah! And from the prince?

LOUISA.

He comes
To perch upon my honor like a hawk,
To steal it while 'tis living. He persuades

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

The cardinal, this very stroke of my heart,
That I am wicked.

ALFIERI.

Ho! Is Italy
An assassin's prison that it holds you barred?
Escape. Or rather, go. Go where you feel
The air is purest and restraint least foul.
To Germany. To France.

LOUISA—(*Changeful*)—

The issue still
Abides the judgment of the cardinal, who
Approves the separation, I am sure.

ALFIERI.

When Alfieri gained himself release,
The obligations of his title were
More urgent than your fortune or your vows.
Decide. If need be—to America.
She's Freedom's child. The world is wide enough
For honest liberty.

LOUISA—(*Impatiently*)—

Hold, wait and see.
His reverence keeps genial mastery
Over my will. Revolt from his benign
Advice were like a rabble's mutiny.

ALFIERI.

But if—

LOUISA.

"If" is the devil's syllable.

ALFIERI.

The devil, then. This man may argue true,
Or with truth's likeness, and his tongue persuade
Your brother's red cap—red's the devil's hue—
You must undo what's done, re-wing your flight.

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

LOUISA.

I will not.

ALFIERI.

So? Then where's his mastery?

LOUISA.

If, when he rules severe, I hesitate,
He rules less hard, and then—I then obey.

ALFIERI.

A woman's heart loves steel until she loves
It not. And if this lawyer stay—persist?

LOUISA.

I will not bide his pleas.

ALFIERI.

You'll disappear,
Eliminate yourself from the argument?

LOUISA.

I shall not run away, but I shall put
Distance between my unhappiness and his.

ALFIERI.

How *your* unhappiness?

LOUISA.

Oh, I shall lose
Mine by the way, if I be entertained
With poems read to me.

ALFIERI.

Ah, heaven's awake!
Its opening portals suddenly reveal
More than I ever thought a door could hide.
You'll come then, quit the harbor of the church,
And sail to a new horizon, where the sun
Rises no more upon dead bones! With me!—
To fashion a new throne and shape a crown

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

That is not meant for snarling royalty!
As potentates of earnest men, to have
A court for all time, peopled from all lands!
I found you out, and I possess you now
By right of the discovery. Why not?
Sympathy knows her business. Though at times
She must sweep through the barriers that men
Affront her with, convulse the arrogance
Of custom, drown in her commanding waves
Wealth, rank and ceremony and the codes
Of sallow and diseased propriety,
She but expands the channel-bed o'er which
She mistresses, pacific in her purpose.
Sympathy merges now our impulses.
Come you with me.

LOUISA.

Your lips uncloseth my thought.

ALFIERI.

They would *inclose* your answer with a seal
Of ecstasy.

*(The dramatist seizes her in his embrace and she repulses
a kiss.)*

LOUISA.

Hold, hold! The cardinal's house!

ALFIERI.

Ah, do not build more walls that I must scale.

LOUISA.

The walls are set. This lawyer is not heard.
He may persuade me—

ALFIERI.

Never!

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

LOUISA.

—to return.

ALFIERI.

You're jesting.

LOUISA.

No. The queen must face the man.
He may present a compromise.

ALFIERI.

Ah! Then

I'll linger to observe which way the dice
Assort the affair.

LOUISA.

Prudence will not permit
The view of you to whet the argument
Of this designer, Charles's advocate.

ALFIERI.

Though Prudence is a meddler, I shall not
Seek to restrict her impudence. Indeed,
I bind you over to the mercy of
Your husband's counsellor, and meekly go
To stand a picket at the convent gate,
Contending with impatience. I shall wait
To hear the echo of the dice from you—
Which will be my way, mark.

LOUISA.

Be not so sure.

I may pass by you—thus—and slam the door
In haste, as though you were a thief.

ALFIERI.

Not that.

I swear I know. —And I shall wait amused
With grateful pictures of this lawyer's wit,

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

Praying he may be an examiner
Of threatening brow and steady parrying.
Ah, I shall find my patience as he looks
Bold at your blushes and all-mocking cries,
“What more?” And you shall run in haste—to me.

LOUISA.

Ah, it is you that writes of tyranny,
Teaching your pen a traitor’s language while
You rail at despots! Still you aspire to rule
Over a woman’s purpose.

ALFIERI—(*Laughing*)—

Can it be
That liberty is harder than restraint?
That independence is less tolerable
Than baneful guidance kings administer?
You fear exprobration more than a dungeon,
Just as a disambitioned convict, who,
Delivered from his cell, returns again.
If change is despotism, then am I
Of its apostleship. If tyranny
Is teaching a young eagle how to fly,
Then am I of the eyrie where ’tis taught.
I look with heart distressed and torn upon
These boiling tubs of Europe, running full
Of angry bubbles. I should not desire
The mastery of the tubs, but of the bubbles
I would be teacher, prick their vaporings,
Inspire them with the uplift of calm reason.
All thinking is not thought, but if you think
Persuasion an oppressor, or the light
A fierce invader of the darkness, hold
It treason to the present to conspire
With the usurping future, then I swear
All circumstance is hostile to the soul,

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

Music is blood-thirsty because it sways
Your emotion, slumber is a spy because
It betters your fatigued opinions,
Your enemy has taken you by ambush
When he makes you his friend. I'll not deny
That I would make you happy, and to pay
The penalty will make me happy, too.

LOUISA.

Come—read to me. It is the cardinal's house.
Poets should carry verses on their persons,
Like tradesmen money. What is your latest ware?

ALFIERI.

A lovely woman not prepared to smile
Should hardly reckon on a poet's muse
Producing verses. Still, I'll not rebel,
Like the queen's sunny countenance, but respond
To nature. Ah, out comes the sun.

(LOUISA smiles, and ALFIERI draws out a manuscript.)

LOUISA—(*Holding forth her hand*)—
The lines.

(ALFIERI reluctantly yields the manuscript.)

I'll read your thoughts. They are more decorous
In the thrice-tempting witchery of ink
Than in the thrice-emboldened accents of
Their undertaking. It is safer to
Imprison a suggestion in a verse
Than to release it in bad etiquette.

(LOUISA reads alone.)

ALFIERI—(*Aside*)—

Bad etiquette! Are poetry and art
Refuges to keep poets and artists out
Of mischief, the asylum of the emotions?

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

She reads my two odes to America.
To write of independence, in her eyes,
Is wiser than to fight for it. Ah, well,
The queen has not yet banished me for that.
Perhaps—perhaps, she finds rebellion
Against the state the sweeter license in
A lover.

(*The DUKE OF CERI and the Spanish ambassador, GRIMALDI, also the DUCHESS ZAGAROLO, enter.*)

GRIMALDI.

Ah! And do we find you waiting?

ALFIERI.

Never, your grace. The man who tarries in
The expectancy of events takes his own life.
Time is all useful and impatience loss.
I have been thinking, and the Countess reads;
But we are happy in your coming.

LOUISA—(*Folding the manuscript*)—
Good!

The Count speaks for me.

GRIMALDI.

But—Antigone?

ALFIERI.

She is committed to the destiny
Of all imagination—criticism.
Duke, let us clear the center. To begin,
We shall take up Scene 2, Act III. (*To CERI.*) This
way.

Creon stands haughty here, with you beside
His throne. Ah, Duchess, you,—Antigone—
Come bound in chains, dejected, yet with firm
Demeanor. When I speak, Antigone



The Alfieri Monument at Florence (Canova)

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

Stands high, erect, and looks me eye to eye.

“Approach: thou findest me, Antigone,*

“Much more disposed to favor than before.

“Not that I deem thy enterprise less guilty,

“Or the annexed affliction less thy due.

“Paternal love, more than the love of justice,

“Hath wrought this change. My son most fervently

“Hath asked for thee my pardon, and obtained it,

“Provided that thou pledge thyself—”

ZAGAROLO—(*As Antigone*)—

“To what?”

ALFIERI.

Ah, the superbest lightning in your eye!

“To give him in my sight without delay

“A recompense he well deserves—thy hand.”

CERI—(*As Haemon*)—

“Pardon, Antigone—I never asked

“So great a blessing. He would give thee to me:

“I wished alone to rescue thee from death.”

ALFIERI.

“On this condition thou obtain'st thy pardon.”

ZAGAROLO.

“Does Creon offer kindness? Ah, to me

“What kindness can he show so great as death?

“Death can alone eternally remove me

“From thy detested sight.”

(*A servant enters, who delivers a message to LOUISA.*)

LOUISA.

Antigone,

Forget your lines awhile. The cardinal

*Bowring's Translation.

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

Has sent a message to me. If alone,
He'll come to me. I dare not cross his wish.

ALFIERI.

We'll choose another stage.

LOUISA.

Try yonder room.

(*To servant.*) Direct them to the cardinal's library.
I shall attend you presently.

ALFIERI—(*To LOUISA*)—

This man—

This fellow—comes to plead. The convent gate,
Remember. I shall wait—

LOUISA.

Ah, do not watch

For me, say, longer than a fortnight. I
Shall quite forget you in so long a time.

ALFIERI.

Ho! I will make you come with all my strength.

(*Exeunt all save LOUISA, the party of players retiring to the right. The COUNTESS stands transfixed, but presently recovers herself and glides toward the window on the left.*)

LOUISA.

I had not guessed I was afraid—till now:
Afraid to follow impulse and afraid
To tarry. It is cruel to a woman
To burden with discretion her desire.
She should be swept with torrents that her soul
Might never say she did it. Had I been
Seized by the strongest current and borne out
Beyond my moorings, then the thing were done

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

And certitude had swallowed up my fears.
Here I stand trembling lest I do his wish
Of my own choice. I am the arbiter.
Perhaps this lawyer may devise a way
To save me from decision, from myself.

*(As LOUISA stands meditating before the window, the
CARDINAL enters with BROGLIO.)*

BROGLIO.

And yet I must forbid her writing, lest
Her friends of Florence know he came not here.

CARDINAL.

Invent, invent—the truth—truth's shape, which may
Compose her mind and keep her ignorant.
'Twere better still to reveal the whole affair.
Louisa, turn. Our friend, the advocate.

*(LOUISA has turned from the window and now recognizes
BROGLIO.)*

LOUISA.

'Tis you, then—you! Not the ambassador
Of law. A spy, who tricked my house into
The attitude of wrong, artfully crept
Into the breast of hospitality!
Huckster of honor! You were at my house
A month of misery ago.

CARDINAL.

Your tongue
Is frenzied. Stop! Your anger has unthroned
Your better nature, sister. The mistake
Is all my own. My guest is innocent.

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

LOUISA.

Pardon me, brother. It was a swift dash
Of feeling. Speak.

CARDINAL.

My visitor is not
A lawyer.

LOUISA.

Ah, I am to deal with him
As other men. I crave your pardon, sir,
For misaccusing.

BROGLIO—(*Bowing*)—

'Tis your highness' right.

LOUISA.

I pray you: not "your highness." 'Tis not mine.
I've gained a higher title. I'm a woman.

BROGLIO.

My mission to your house concerned not you;
My mission here, not you, except in this:
Charles Edward's friend, though not your enemy,
I must request that in your letters to
Your friends—and his—at Florence you refrain
From saying that he is not here—in Rome—
And at his brother's house.

LOUISA.

Here?

CARDINAL.

Rather, if
You tell them—. No, I may not counsel lies.

LOUISA.

Is Charles in Rome?

CARDINAL.

No. Truly, child, he is
Not here.

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

LOUISA.

What means this solemn mystery
Over something that is not?

CARDINAL.

Enough of this.
Tell everything. The truth is good enough
For Stuarts. Reveal the matter, Broglio.

BROGLIO.

Can you withhold his mention from your tongue?

LOUISA.

Only what's of the heart is of the speech;
And neither love nor hate of him lies here.

BROGLIO.

Your highness, you will yet be queen in fact,
Co-monarch of three British realms. The king,
Your husband, generals ten thousand men,
Faced toward the country of his fathers.

LOUISA.

True?

Then—I am saved.

BROGLIO.

If safety is your view,
You are in danger of becoming queen.
The thing is true—if reason so conceive
The function of a fact. Believe me that.
Take a friend's counsel: check your countenance,
Your highness, from th' appearance of disdain,
That your coming to the throne be decently
Apported.

LOUISA.

“Highness”—still you call me that!
Moreover, I'm a woman.

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

BROGLIO.

Possible

For woman to achieve to majesty.

LOUISA.

Ah, you remember well, the ministers
Of France contrived the alliance of the king
With me, Louisa von Stolberg-Gedern. I,
Perhaps, consented through ambition.
My youthful hopes were but the vapors of
The potage, vanity. But in the world
The passing years distill the blackest dreams—
And even Louisa may have purity
Jewelled like dew upon her fanciful
Heart-petals. Once, I had been queen.
To-day—. Ah, even a queen must think.

(LOUISA turns again to the window on the left.)

CARDINAL—(To BROGLIO)—

How true!

For does not thinking rescue many times
The judgment from false rhapsodies?

BROGLIO.

Indeed!

I had forgot the queen while thinking of
His majesty. The snare of snares! The queen
Shall bind up Britain's homage in her smile.

CARDINAL.

The minister of her ambition
May save her soul from folly.

BROGLIO.

Foolish, indeed,

If she lend not her fascination to

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

The conquering of subjects. What say you
To sending her to Paris, Louis's court;
Whence the report of beauty's triumph may
Be quickly spread to England?

CARDINAL.

Were it wise
To thus alarm the British government,
Whose ears are ever pricked to hear a sound?
Besides, that would release religion's hold
Upon her heart-strings. Be content to gain
This promise from her: to remain in Rome—
The convent; later to rejoin the king
In England.

BROGLIO.

Speak to her, your reverence.
Persuade her first she is "her majesty."

CARDINAL.

Louisa, turn. I greet your majesty.

BROGLIO.

France, too, pays tribute to your majesty.

LOUISA.

I am a woman, truly. (*To BROGLIO.*) Who are you,
That you convey this news? Is not the thing
Conditioned on some miracle?

(DUKE GRIMALDI *enters hastily and cuts off a reply from*
BROGLIO.)

GRIMALDI.

Ho, ho!
The marshal, Broglio. (*They draw aside.*)

CARDINAL—(*To LOUISA*)—

He is from France,

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

Her confidential agent, with success
In the palm of his hand. Grimaldi knows—. (*They talk.*)

GRIMALDI—(*To BROGLIO*)—
And does she hesitate?

BROGLIO.

'Tis dread of Charles.

GRIMALDI.

Affairs of spite are no release from duty.
Let Spain be heard awhile. Your majesty,
Let me rejoice with you that a girl's prayer
Is now a woman's pleasure. Good at cards,
Supreme at ruling men. My maxim, friends.
The queen plays whist as though 'twere winning thrones.
Our venture's fully launched—the ambassador
Of Spain would not deceive a woman. Well—
It is my counsel that the queen await
The consummation at her palace-seat
In Florence, to amuse her acquaintances
Out of their gossip, lest suspicion
Spread injury to the cause. She should embark
At once. The matter has more than it should
Gone unprotected in the mouths of friends.
I know her answer.

CARDINAL.

Sister, do you hear?

LOUISA.

I'm thinking that Count Alfieri left
His manuscripts.

(*She picks up the poems lately placed upon the table.*)

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

GRIMALDI.

No matter. He is gone.
Grimaldi will provide for their return.

(The DUKE takes the manuscripts from the hand of LOUISA, now left alone in the foreground. Enter a servant.)

LOUISA—*(Alone)*—
I may not purchase, only price the crown.
When shall I leave, Grimaldi? *(Turns.)* Where's the duke?

(The CARDINAL receives a message from the servant.)

CARDINAL.
Impossible!

BROGLIO.
A slip!

GRIMALDI.
Repeat the word—.

(Enter CHARLES EDWARD, intoxicated. He reels past the three men. LOUISA turns away.)

CHARLES.
Louisa! Brother—look. Where did you hide
Louisa?

LOUISA—*(To GRIMALDI)*—
Quick! The poems—where are they?

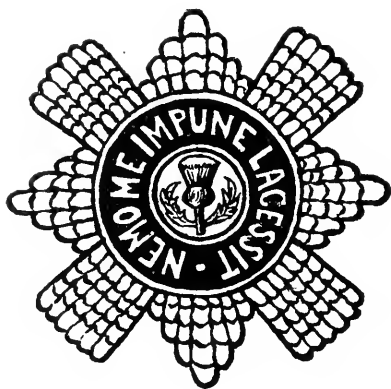
(LOUISA seizes ALFIERI'S manuscripts from the hand of the DUKE. Exit.)

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

CHARLES.

Did not I see Louisa here just now?

(CURTAIN.)





The Fifth Act

A DECANTER OF WINE

PLACE—*Rome.*

TIME—*Morning. Two days have elapsed.*

SCENE—*Another room in the house of the CARDINAL OF YORK.*

Who is it sits at yonder table writing? The MARSHAL DE BROGLIO—no other. If you wish to know what the alphabet was made for, ask a Frenchman. The alphabet was made to preserve language—and French is that language. Give it to a Frenchman to say a thing, and to an Englishman to answer it: the history of diplomacy and war. The MARSHAL is not writing altogether, either. Why not an occasional sip of the CARDINAL'S good wine to inspire the proceedings of state? I sometimes wonder if French wine and French wit are not of the same vintage. A decanter of rare blossom may make a whole nation laugh—if it is not made to sob. BROGLIO'S decanter is engaged in a more solemn enterprise than the making of laughter or tears.

Yes, I had observed the canopy in the rear, and I was about to remark that this must be the throne room of the unseated STUART. The elevated chair of solemn massiveness and elaborate carvings will serve as a reminder of ancestral royalty, while the arms of

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

Great Britain complete the illusion handsomely. The four standards and their canopy may keep off the weather. Do you decipher the words, Sir Leslie, upon the red banner bearing the white space in the center? "Tandem Triumphans." It is the banner of the CHEVALIER CHARLES EDWARD STUART, the ensign of the last pretender in '45.

BROGLIO.

MY dear Choiseul—" (*A pause.*) What may one build from sand?
The duke can read! The black impossible
Is not the white of possible. The trey
And deuce cannot be made two sixes, for
Down is not up. Surely he understands
A truth an infant were too wise to utter—
Unless the child become philosopher,
And too much brains discover doubt of it.
'Twill answer. (*Seals letter.*) Now another—which is
not
So deep a task. 'Tis harder to explain
Misfortune to a statesman than a fool.
Fools do not argue why a thrashing hurts.
"To your most gracious, Christian majesty—"
Decorum is a stilted idiot.

(He rings a servants' bell and continues writing. Enter servant.)

The king may not be seen?

SERVANT.

His majesty

Is in retirement, but—

BROGLIO.

No matter. Stay.

Give this to York—his reverence. Through him

T H E L A S T O F T H E S T U A R T S .

'Twill find due lodgment in the king's regard.

This—post. No—(*Exit servant*)—I shall care for it—
myself.

(BROGLIO *empties the goblet of wine, and prepares to depart.*)

At least, the time was spent in Italy.

CARDINAL—(*Entering with letter*)—
Peace, marshal. Do you go?

BROGLIO.

Yes. Back to France.

CARDINAL.
And Charles—?

BROGLIO.

Apprised by letter—through your hands.
Deliver it, I pray you, when he cures.
Adieu.

CARDINAL.

Adieu. (*Exit BROGLIO.*)

(*His reverence sits and scans the letter.*)

The stare of secrecy
Is on it. An expansive cliff could not
Look with less meaning; still, I understand.
He shall not break the staring seal until
Religion choose to let it speak to him.
This cannot mend his brain. My craft concerns
The majesty of heaven, more than this crown.
I had foresworn the trinket long ago,
But for French wit that must repeat the joke.
His thought is withered. It must be refreshed

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

With something that has vintage in the stars.
Religion yet remains. —I'm thinking of you, Charles.

(The PRETENDER enters, stepping slowly and with a palsied gait. He casts a glance upon the mimic throne and stops before his brother.)

CHARLES.

Forgive me, brother: I am king again.

CARDINAL.

Forgive? Your words have answered to your soul's
Entreaty, when you named me brother. King?—
King, did you say? First of a realm the king
Has not yet secretly invaded, here—

(The CARDINAL inclines his ear to the PRETENDER'S breast as it were to listen to the throbbing of his heart.)

I heard the drum. The world and all its realms
Await the conquering of such a king.

(The PRETENDER turns to the throne and steps upon the platform.)

CHARLES.

An act of kindness from a brother's hands.
I crown myself. The world has seen me stripped.
You see me clothed. And when it looks again,
England its monarch may discern. My reign
Begins. *(He sits.)*

CARDINAL.

You speak with fire.

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

CHARLES.

And do you feel
My brain between your fingers, crumbling
Like ashes? (*Rises.*) Ho! My body chills with age—
They think. The thaw is on. Mark that.

CARDINAL.

Your meaning?

CHARLES.

My meaning? What! You do not know? Did not
The marshal make you sharer of my plans? (*Descends.*)

CARDINAL.

He did.

CHARLES.

Why then this questioning? I mean
The thing that's meant. I leave forthwith for Spain.

CARDINAL.

Tomorrow?

CHARLES.

Now—if Broglio is here
To reacquaint me with—. No matter. He—
Has mastery of the thing. I may forget
Instructions. And besides, Louisa—where?—

(The CARDINAL turns away for the moment.)

I'll see her here. She will be reconciled.
Here let her stay, to abide th' enthronement of
Her lord, myself. I was too cruel, no doubt—
Too petulant in straining our desire
Beyond th' appointed moment. It is come.
The dial of regnancy has circled 'round
To Stuart's hour. —Where's Broglio?

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

CARDINAL.

Gone out.

(*Aside.*) The letter speaks for him—the only thing.

CHARLES.

He will return?

CARDINAL—(*Presenting letter*)—

Here's his apology.

For you to await his person had delayed

The message.

CHARLES—(*Taking the letter*)—

Thank you. Just as politic. (*He opens
clumsily and reads.*)

This Frenchman comes to nothing. On!—read on!

I find no end. What does the devil say?

Translate the prolix into brevity.

(*The PRETENDER returns the note to the CARDINAL, who
reads.*)

I wait. 'Tis some delay from France, no doubt.

But what of that? May France invade the moon—

Play no-one false save moon-conspirators.

The king of England will not wait for him,

If, waiting, he must pass petitions through

The brain of Louis. Such delay becomes

Disease. Hope is a crime when desperation

Is hope's reward. 'Tis a celestial flower,

Blooming upon a cloud that promises

The wafture of one's enterprise to heaven.

Strip it—the venture's but a stalk.

CARDINAL.

He says—

When words are voided through the seive—he says

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

The creeds of politics forbid the stake
Of his court's honor on the game you play.
The instrument faults in its edge. A worm
Cankers the tooth whereby he aimed the bite.
The fabric, majesty, is flawed—

CHARLES.

Destruction

Take his worms and cankers! Stuart's purpose
Has got velocity from his French craft.
What more is needed?—since the drunken worm
And much-wined canker have an edge in sheath
As superfine and certain as e'er cleaved
The sections of a French diplomatist's
War maxim. Charles will show you.

*(The PRETENDER has stopped before the table upon which
sits the decanter of wine. He tremblingly fills the
goblet.)*

CARDINAL.

Stay! Beware

That food.

CHARLES.

The food of anger—will.

CARDINAL.

Indeed,

A painted will! An artifice, the trick
Of gorgeous tapestries!

CHARLES.

Not that. I need

My anger. Now I think of it, my throat's
A desert.

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

CARDINAL.

King!—refrain.

CHARLES—(*In the midst of his drinking*)—
To Spain tonight!

A torrent to convulse the channel of
Vain dreaming. Hark you, we shall meet a throne.
A throne! You were quite right to call me king.
A harmless cup of majesty—that drives
The blood of certainty throughout the veins
Of the king's sword. My Spanish cohorts wait
The coming of their wine-cup, heaven's prince.
Listen. The echo of the drum that beats
Within my breast—they strain their ears for that.
They shall not bide too long the monarch's soul—
The soul that leaps in lightning to the eye,
In valor to the angle of the arm.
Again, again. The valiant regiments! (*Pours.*)

CARDINAL.

No more, no more: for—Broglio waits without.

CHARLES—(*Drinking*)—

Command him wait—wait—wait! Yes, bid him stay
Immovable as statecraft, and the clock
Stop with him, stagnant, till he resurrect
In felstone, and the faring peasants point
And cry, "There worships Folly heaven." Ah!—
I lack his counsel less than the air he breathes.
England will march to England without France—
England and England's queen. Louisa—queen!
Where is she waiting? (*Drinks.*) Fly, love's wine,
(*Pours.*) fly to
Your mistress. (*Drinks.*) Fly! Exalt your wings to
heaven.
And with ethereal eloquence persuade
An answer from her. Say, "The king is here."

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

There, on the nimbus of the sun, she sits,
Queen of the light, my heart and England. Fly!
(*Drinks.*)

CARDINAL—(*Touching a bell*)—
No more. This letter—this tells everything.
'Twas dropped upon my table yesterday.

(CHARLES takes another letter from the hand of the CARDINAL.)

CHARLES.
More written pleasantries that do not please.

SERVANT—(*Entering*)—
Your reverence.

CARDINAL.
Did not I give command
To have all wine removed?

SERVANT.

Indeed—

CARDINAL.

And this?—

SERVANT.
'Twas at the order of your guest that sat—

CARDINAL.
Of Broglio. Enough. Take it away.

CHARLES.
Knave, touch it not. Who "cannot stay?" Beware!
You wrong me, brother. (*Reading.*) What is this?

CARDINAL—(*To servant*)—

No use. (*Exit servant.*)

CHARLES.
Who writes? It reads in Babylonish bricks.
Trail your eye through this Alpine mule-path.

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

CARDINAL—(*Taking the letter*)— Stop!—
'Tis from Louisa.

CHARLES.

Eh? The queen? And where—?

CARDINAL.

She is not here.

CHARLES—(*Pouring*)—

I asked not where she's not.

CARDINAL.

Her majesty, the queen, has gone from Rome—
To Germany.

(*The PRETENDER drops the goblet upon the floor.*)

CHARLES.

To Herenhausen? Lie!

To drink, and laugh, from Brunswick's Rhenish cups?
To dwell with thieves and the ungraced of God,
Who smear her monarch's throne with the vile snuff
Of Lotzbeck? Ugh! I will not foster an
Indictment that breaks down love's blood in palsy.
Wait till I have news.

CARDINAL.

She will not write—

(*Aside.*) Better to tear from under every stone
That he may build upon.

CHARLES.

She will not write.

I know that well. She will not. She is gone
With this soft interloper—*him* that writes;
That writes deceits and documents of love.
I know him, cavallero, poet. Rhymes
That cheat a husband of his house! Besides—
To Germany! A double treachery!

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

To wed Hanover, foiling God's majesty
Of his loved country's king. Traitress as well
As faithless. Exile!—long may she adore
Her poet and her beer. Come, wine and I—(*Searches
for the goblet*)—

And Spain—and wine—will haste to England. Drink
For a bird's voyage: wings may laugh at waves,
Even if we have no vessel. Where's the cup?

(*He seizes the decanter.*)

England's whole navy! (*Drinks.*)

CARDINAL.

Can this nightmare end?

At morning—that is yonder.

(*The PRETENDER reels backward across the room, decanter in hand, and recovering his equilibrium, replaces the decanter upon the table. The CARDINAL turns to the mantel and rests his face upon his hands.*)

CHARLES.

I'll have music—

Mirth-clad, mellow, saturating music.
Come, Domenico—the spinet. Play—
The strathspey. Let me think the number. What!—
Music is false to me? Another tongue
That joins my queen and recreant land against
Their lord?—swears treachery beside them? (*With a
voice full of agony.*) Music!—
Art thou, too, of Germany? The king
Must *know* you dead, the last of all his friends.
My tears were honorable upon thy bier.
Not could I weep if music mocked her king,

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

Living and silent. I will choke the voice
That soils her honor to deny her dead.
No more her whisper, never more her song.
Domenico, Domenico—she is dead.

(The PRETENDER falls prostrate upon the sofa.)

CARDINAL.

The spirit's plumes are fluttering in exhaustion.
To sleep, poor child—the broken-hearted bairn
Of gray locks.

(The CARDINAL closes the window shutter, and after smoothing the brow of CHARLES, picks up the decanter.)

Never more of this. The last. *(Exit.)*

(The PRETENDER lies for a time benumbed. Shortly he rises upon his arm.)

CHARLES.

Is Charles alone, and does his brain discern
Only fantastic scarlet?—the mirage
Of torrid sands?—a palpitating film,
Of silken likeness to dawn's images?
Have thine eyes mortal wings, which thus transport
From the hot winds of hell these glaring balls?—
Gazing like conscience on me? Look from me,
And gaze on devils. I am of the earth,
The sceptered of Jehovah's wisest world;
And none may dare to rip the curtain of
My solitude, to pierce the inviolate.
Whose eyes are ye?—if language ye have learned
From thrusting your sharp swords of vision through

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

The lies of many tongues. Ho! Fleance—sire! (*Rises to his feet.*)

Our Fleance, first of kings begotten! Friend,
Whose father Banquo, the progenitor
Of Stuarts, sighed his last breath in murder. Say—
Thou wilt not harm thy son, whose wintry hairs
Attest no crime but being? Who atones
The crime, which, counting back to the first springs
Of my nativity contributive,
Fixes on fewer sires and, firstly, one—
The only answerable?

We may not quarrel
With shifting seeds, or with the vagrant sands.
I come to tell thee, Death, how Life obeys
Each signal of the sun. Day's subject still,
I speak but cringe, lest Day may glare me silent.
—Treasons still fruit, and every dawn begets
A brood of worms. Customs grow heretic,
That God's weak will is thwarted when he wills
A king. Thou whom old Death hath robed in mist,
Hear me: Death's vapors rise and rise and mark
The heavens with white memories of earth,
But the old evils drop. And, positing
New forms—old ills—, what good were Death, save but
To leave the devil in late-conjured shapes?

Stay, eyes; close not. Death weighs its lids upon
You heavy. Gone! The dark is fearless. Whence
Shall purpose come, that armies may affright,
Or weeping melt, what is not? If the day
Winks merry its departure, what am I,
To grieve for smiles that I behold no more?
Laugh, yesterdays, in the oblivion
Ye dawn upon; and may strange men arise
To pluck ye better at your further bloom.

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

Gone? No, the king spake false. Returned, perhaps.
Strange—others come to writhe the roots of my hair.
I know you, Bruce—bold Bruce of Bannockburn!
God raised you up, but God—where is he now?
Whom shall men crown, if God uncrowns his kings?
Not chance-wit scullions, whose blood is mixed
With the rank pottage of long servitude!
Such is the choice, if noble heads conspire;
And if usurpers blaspheme 'gainst the throne,
They preach the way to public blasphemy.
Robert, the Earl of Carrick, whose destiny
Hung tense upon a spider's web, uphold
The lash of a long scourge of kings, until
It smite with its sharp cry the sleeping ears
Of the usurper. Look—an answer! Out!—
The vision dies. Its way is always so:
Toward the accomplished darkness.

These succeed.

Succession's fix-ed lips reply once more—
Silence, the speech that is the grave of speech.
Whose are ye? Of the universe?—the dumb,
Heaped up, old centuries, quarreling from
Their loom and tangled midst eternity?

More kings!—whose mother's soul was only half
Repaid with joy enough for getting you.

Back, back! A dastard's blow!—to meet a man
Thus unattended by his scabbard. Coward!
The king lies dead.

Another!—on the field.
My brain perceives the name of yonder walls.
A noble fall that Roxburgh shall confirm
Its memory by.

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

And Sauchie-burn!

Hold!—there

Disaster wreaks his bloodiest skill upon
The turf of Flodden. I will swear you brave
Henceforth.

More murder! Hell's own echo of
Earth's deeds!

Eternal God! A woman comes,
With beauty and the crucifix. And death
Drapes the hard shadow of men's hearts about
Her bosom. Stay—pray not. This devil's deed
Weighs heaven's rapture past a thousand-fold.
Cry out, ye doors! Thou darkness, shriek with light!
And summon celestial hindrance to this—. Love!—
Pity!—and mercy!—cannot look; nor I.
Emotion freezes. Mother, was there pain
I could not feel for thee? And did the heart
Utter in anguish words my far-off ears
Could hear not? Weep, my birth, whose summons came
Too late to comfort—not with life, but death
Robed in compassion. Grieve, tardy Charles,
Or curse the line of sires that stood you off.
I was in ignorance.

May God defend!

Another climbs the stair, with heaven's locks
Strewn from his gemless diadem upon
Him. Now, the tresses of the cavalier
Should foil the edge, though grace forbear it not.
Like a bewildered rose among the snarls
And brambles, sways the flower of monarchs. Wake!—
Pass on, mad brain, and teach me not this tale.

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

Was one, and she a woman, not enough?
Enough!

My father's father, next of stem.
Proud exile! Who am I, that I should share
Disease as honorable as thine? Bend not
Upon thy staff: it bends my spirit's bones.

Another exile walks the dark outside.
My father's immortal heart still loves me. Come—
Thy hand to lean my lips upon. Compressed
In that one pause of fervor, eloquence
Remits her ecstasy. Thus do I speak
Unto the hand that lost a Scotland.

Ah!—
A Scotland lost? Nay—earned. The king is here,
Come to his own land. How can they require
A prince to bloom, save from his country's soil?

The liquid dawn anoints the hill,
These highland shouts, the pibroch shrill,
Convulse Glenfinnan's early dews.
Ho, Moray! Ride, and rank the blues
About the banner. Tartan plaids
And bonnets, sit upon your lads.
Let Scotland's diadem amerce
The pride of Britain's bastard curse;
The day that fares your sovereign worse
May never blossom here.

The standard!—see. My mountaineers
Embank the hillside high with cheers—
The cry I cut upon the stone
Of memory for Caledone.
Yon banner cries aloft and wreathes

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

Its lips in fury. Stay—it breathes
War's raptures from the tartan pipes;
It scents the glory ere it ripens.
There on the wind my soul unfurls
And writes its name in silken swirls.
It writes, but would it, if it could,
A paction save in German blood?
The virtue of the maiden's snood
Conditions yonder flag.

The gale is up; my thistles speed
Enraptured 'cross the western mead.
And who be these that scale the crag?
And these that come with kilt and bag
And loyal fly to Scotland's weal?
MacDonald, Murray and Lochiel,
Clanranald, Keppoch, Moidart's seven,
Meet for your prince's pride of heaven,
Brandish your claymores. By my boast,
The throttle of Prince Charlie's host
The breath of yon usurper's ghost
Shall choke within its gulp.

Scale o'er the crags. Ye headsmen, scoot
Your snorting nags, and follow, foot.
They spread—my hardy mountaineers—
Like thistles, fearless of their fears,
Unto Dunedin's welcome muirs.

Ah!—Gladsmuir heath. There Cope arrives;
The flaunt of Brunswick's banner thrives
In his advance. Retreat shall drag
The mires of Preston with this flag.
Down from the heights my Myrmidons
Sweep like a torrent o'er their bones.

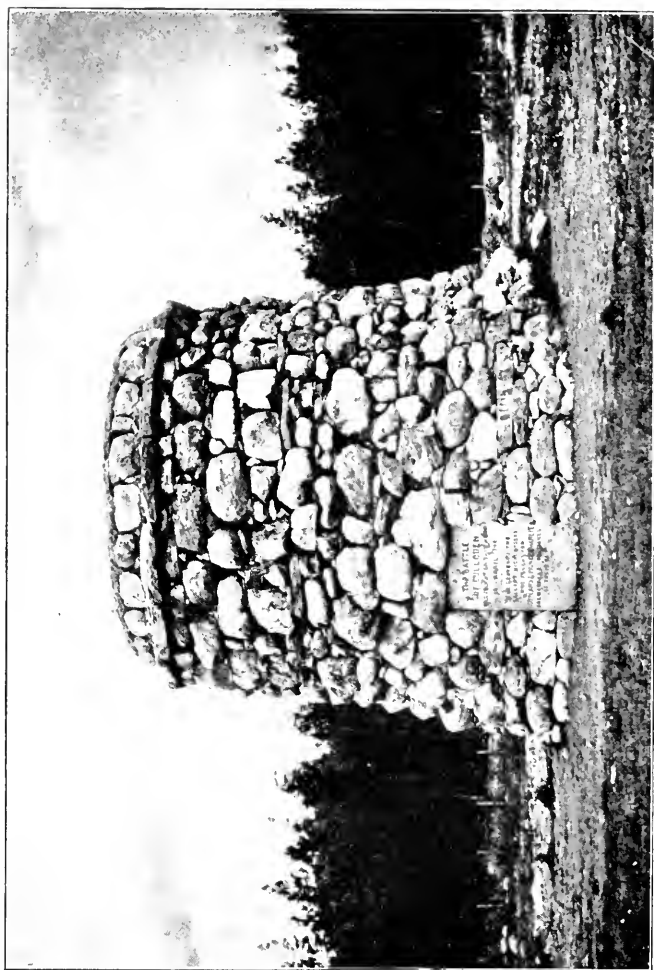
THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

A torrent's task, a torrent's rout—
Wherepast a child might harder flout
A brood of chickens from his path.
And tears, repenting useless wrath,
Baptise the victor by the faith
Of Christian charity.

At Holyrood my vision spends
A heart-beat's passing, and descends
In ardor on my eyes;
At Holyrood, where beauty spurns
The treason George as booty earns
But worships as a prize;
At Holyrood, the hallowed place,
Whose lamps glow brilliant by the grace
Of laughter on each lass's face
And fade if beauty dies.

The minuet!—ah, phantom night
That lives its laughter by the right
Of one swift torture of delight,
Torn from conspiring frowns!
The dream that Scotland's cavalier
Discerns fantastic through a tear!—
The place is Edinburgh, and 'Forty-five the year.

No more the gallants. Border-men
Rise out of them, nor dance again.
Dropped from the toe upon the heel
With Murray, Keppoch and Lochiel,
Their music is the martial peal
Of trumpets to the fray.
Mine eyes are drunken with the change
From mirth to blinding mist. How strange
I cannot see the way!



The Monument of Cullooden Battlefield

THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

Stay—'tis the march on Londontown,
By sward and river, crag and down.
By Sheridan to Derby sweep,
But let determination sleep,
That Scotland's soul may never weep
Its last disgrace again.
What faltering prowess backward sped!
What vintage!—could that prowess tread
The wine-fat of the Brunswick dead.
Alas! Where are you, men?

It taunts me as it swiftly runs.
Mad brain, a cataract of suns,
My dizzy sight betray.
Falkirk forgets its conquest's ease,
Now swallowed up in war's disease.
A skulker in the Hebrides
Shall think on war's dismay.

The fate, the wrath, of yon retreat;
Culloden's teeth of biting sleet;
The tempest poured by heaven's hand
(A carnage not of Cumberland):
They gnaw my bosom as my sight
Concerns the memory of their blight.
Ah, clansmen, could you stand and fight
The hornets at your bay!

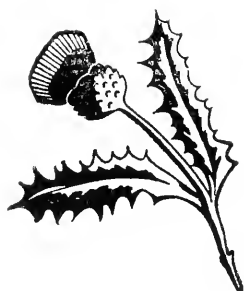
He may not look upon thy loss,
Fair Scotland, dying on the cross;
He may not look—thine exiled king—,
Groaning the scourge of every sting
Upon thy loyalty.
He may not mock thee with his breath,
His memories disdaining death,
The living symbols of his faith—.
Down, standard; fall with me.

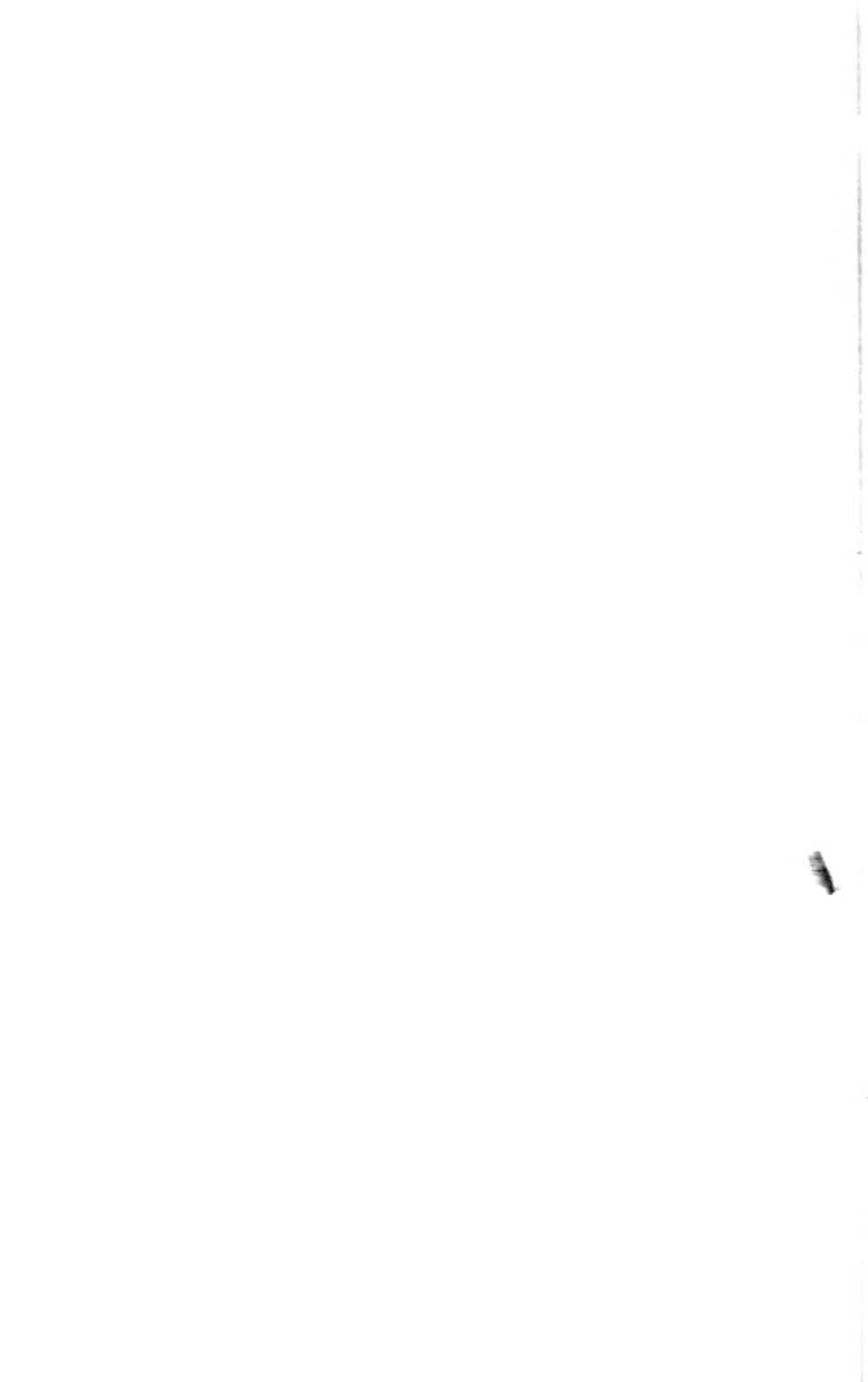
THE LAST OF THE STUARTS.

(The PRETENDER violently seizes the Jacobite standard and drags it down. The banner falls around his shoulders and as he struggles from under it, his hallucinations again possess him.)

No more! My sight aches, and I dare not look
Upon thee. Out! The king commands. Again?
What further malady the fiends inflict
Upon mine eye-balls? George!—sitting in pomp.
I will not see thee; for to look upon
Thine infamy of theft, were to give grace
Of honest favor to thee. Traitor, too,
If I should look on treason. —Eyes of a toad,
Mouth of a lecher. Moon-faced! Travesty
Upon God's image! Hide thy fat creation's
Blasphemy of feature.

Art thou gone?
—Devil's redemption! One usurper out,
Another in. Louisa, fair disdain
Of kings, and he of gallantry. When love
Is poison, how is it desired? When love
Repulses life, how is it longer love?
How many seasons alien was mine age
From thy nativity, that we could not
Inhabit one desire? The separation
Bitterest of them all is that which drives
Into the Scythian exile of decay.
Youth loves its prime, and senile voyagers
Outcast their palsied sympathies alone.
Ovidius wooed his wife to exile. Nay—
But he, Ovidius, was young. While I
In Death's womb only am unborn. I go
To the caress of motherhood that can
But let me sleep an infant's slumber ever.
Yea, I leave these toys behind.





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